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THE
ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

BY
COVENTRY PATMORE.

PART II.

BOOK I.—FAITHFUL FOR EVER.

BOOK II.—THE VICTORIES OF LOVE.

London and Cambridge,
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1863.

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200. c. 246.



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The Circle

THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

PART II.

BOOK I.—FAITHFUL FOR EVER.

"Da quod amo : amo enim, et hoc tu dedisti."

PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

FAITHFUL FOR EVER.

I.

FREDERICK GRAHAM TO HIS MOTHER

MOTHER, I smile at your alarms !
Great are my Wiltshire Cousins' charms,
But, like all nursery maladies,
Love is not badly taken twice.
Have you forgotten Charlotte Hayes,
My playmate in the pleasant days
At Knatchley, and her sister, Anne ;
The twins, so made on the same plan,
That one wore blue, the other white,
To mark them to their father's sight ;

And how, at Knatchley harvesting,
 You bade me kiss her in the ring,
 Like Anne and all the others ? You,
 That never of my sickness knew,
 Will laugh, yet had I the disease,
 And gravely, if the signs are these :

As, ere the Spring has any power,
 The almond branch all turns to flower,
 Though not a leaf is out, so she
 The bloom of life provoked in me ;
 And, hard till then and selfish, I
 Was thenceforth nought but sanctity
 And service ; life was mere delight
 In being wholly good and right,
 As she was ; just, without a slur ;
 Honouring myself no less than her ;
 Obeying, in the loneliest place,
 Ev'n to the slightest gesture, grace,
 Assured that one so fair, so true,
 Somehow he served that was so too.
 For me, hence weak towards the weak,
 No more the unnested blackbird's shriek

Startled the light-leaved wood ; on high
 Wander'd the gadding butterfly,
 Unscared by my flung cap ; the bee,
 Rifling the hollyhock in glee,
 Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,
 And for his honey slain. Her power,
 From great things even to the grass
 Through which the unfenced footways pass,
 Was law, and that which keeps the law,
 Cherubic gaiety and awe ;
 Day was her doing, and the lark
 Had reason for his song ; the dark
 In anagram innumerable spelt
 Her name with stars that throb'd and felt ;
 'Twas the sad summit of delight
 To wake and weep for her at night ;
 She turn'd to triumph or to shame
 The issue of each childish game ;
 The heart would come into my throat
 At rosebuds ; howsoe'er remote,
 In opposition or consent,
 Each thing, or person, or event,

Or seeming neutral howsoe'er,
 All, in the live, electric air,
 Awoke, took aspect, and confess'd
 In her a centre of unrest,
 Yea, stocks and stones within me bred
 Anxieties of joy and dread.

O, bright, apocalyptic sky
 O'erarching childhood ! Far and nigh
 Mystery and obscuration none,
 Yet nowhere any moon or sun !
 What reason for these sighs ? What hope,
 Daunting with its audacious scope
 The disconcerted heart, affects
 These ceremonies and respects ?
 Why stratagems in everything ?
 Why, why not kiss her in the ring ?
 'Tis nothing strange that warriors bold,
 Whose fierce, forecasting eyes behold
 The city they desire to sack,
 Humbly begin their proud attack
 By delving ditches two miles off,
 Aware how the fair place would scoff

At hasty wooing ; but, O child,
 Why thus approach thy playmate mild !

One morning, when it flush'd my thought
 That, what in me such wonder wrought,
 Was call'd, in men and women, love,
 And, sick with vanity thereof,
 I, saying loud, " I love her," told
 My secret to myself, behold
 A crisis in my mystery !
 For, suddenly, I seem'd to be
 Whirl'd round, and bound with showers of threads,
 As when the furious spider sheds
 Captivity upon the fly,
 To still his buzzing till he die ;
 Only, with me, the bonds that flew,
 Enfolding, thrill'd me through and through
 With bliss beyond aught heaven can have,
 And pride to dream myself her slave.

A long, green slip of wilder'd land,
 With Knatchley Wood on either hand,
 Sunder'd our home from hers. This day
 Joyful was I as I went her way.

I stretch'd my arms to the sky, and sprang
 O'er the elastic sod, and sang
 "I love her, love her !" to an air
 Which with the words, came then and there ;
 And even now, when I would know
 All was not always dull and low,
 I whistle a catch of the sweet strain
 Love taught me in that lonely lane.

Such glories fade, with no more mark
 Than when the sunset turns to dark.
 They die, the rapture and the grace
 Ineffable, their only trace
 A heart which, having felt no less
 Than pure and perfect happiness,
 Is duly dainty of delight ;
 A patient, poignant appetite
 For pleasures that exceed so much
 The poor things which the world calls such,
 That, when these tempt it, then you may
 The lion with a wisp of hay.

That Charlotte, whom we scarcely knew
 From Anne but by her ribbons blue,

Was loved, Anne less than look'd at, shows
 That liking still by favour goes !
 This Love is a divinity,
 And holds his high election free
 Of human merit ; or let's say,
 A child by ladies call'd to play,
 But careless of their beck and wiles,
 Till, seeing one who sits and smiles
 Like any else, yet only charms,
 He cries to come into her arms.
 Then, for my Cousins, fear me not !
 None ever loved because he ought.
 Fatal were else this graceful house,
 So full of light from ladies' brows.
 There's Mary ; Heaven in her appears
 Like sunshine through the shower's tears ;
 Mildred's of Earth, yet happier far
 Than most men's thoughts of Heaven are ;
 But, for Honoria, Heaven and Earth
 Seal'd amity in her sweet birth.
 The noble Girl ! With whom she talks
 She knights first with her smile ; she walks,

Stands, dances, to such sweet effect
Alone she seems to move erect.
The brightest and the chastest brow
Rules o'er a cheek which seems to show
That love, as a mere vague suspense
Of apprehensive innocence,
Perturbs her heart ; love without aim
Or object, like the sunlit flame
That in the Vestals' Temple glow'd,
Without the image of a god.
And this simplicity most pure
She sets off with no less allure
Of culture, subtly skill'd to raise
The power, the pride, and mutual praise
Of human personality
Above the common sort so high
It makes such homely souls as mine
Marvel how brightly life may shine.
How you would love her ! Even in dress
She makes the common mode express
New knowledge of what's fit so well
'Tis virtue gaily visible !

Yet virtue does itself consent
 To seem in her but ornament ;
 And, oh ! her silken sash to me
 Were more than all morality,
 But that the old, sweet, feverous ill
 Has left me master of my will.

So, Mother, feel at rest, and please
 To send my books on board. With these,
 When I go hence, each idle hour
 Shall turn to pleasure and to power.
 I've time, you know, to fill my post,
 And yet make up for schooling lost
 Through young sea-service. They all speak
 German with ease ; and this, with Greek,
 (Which Dr. Churchill thought I knew,)
 And history, which I fail'd in too,
 Will stop a gap I somewhat dread,
 After the happy life I've led
 Among these Friends ; and sweet 'twill be
 To abridge the space from them to me.

II.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MY dearest Child, Honoria sways
A double power through Charlotte Hayes !
In minds to first-love's memory pledged
The second Cupid's born full-fledged.
I saw, and trembled for the day
When you should see her beauty, gay
And pure as apple-blooms, that show
Outside a blush and inside snow ;
Her high and touching elegance
Of order'd life as free as chance.
Ah, haste from her bewitching side,
No friend for you, far less a bride !
But, warning from a hope so wild,
I wrong you. Yet this know, my Child :

He that but lends his heart to hear
 The music of a foreign sphere,
 Is thenceforth lonely, and for all
 His days like one who treads the Wall
 Of China, and, on this hand, sees
 Cities and their civilities,
 And, on the other, lions. Well,
 (Your rash reply I thus foretell,
 Good is the knowledge of what's fair,
 Though bought with temporal despair !
 Yes, good for one, but not for two.
 Will it content a wife that you
 Should pine for love, in love's embrace,
 Through having known a happier grace ;
 And break with inward sighs your rest,
 Because, though good, she's not the best ?
 You would, you think, be just and kind,
 And keep your counsel ! You will find
 You cannot such a secret keep.
 'Twill out, like murder, in your sleep ;
 A touch will tell it, though, for pride,
 She may her bitter knowledge hide ;

And, whilst she accepts love's make-believe,
You'll twice despise what you'd deceive.

For your sake, I am glad to hear
You sail so soon. I send you, Dear,
The books you ask'd me for. Adieu !
Tell me of all you are and do.
I know, thank God, whate'er it be,
'Twill need no veil 'twixt you and me.

III.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

THE multitude of voices blythe
Of early day, the hissing scythe
Across the dew drawn and withdrawn,
The noisy peacock on the lawn,
These, and the sun's eye-gladding gleam,
This morning, chased the sweetest dream
That e'er shed penitential grace
On life's forgetful commonplace ;
Yet 'twas no sweeter than the spell
To which I woke to say farewell.

Noon finds me ninety miles removed
From her who must not be beloved ;
And us the whole sea soon shall part,
Heaving for aye, without a heart!

Mother, what need to warn me so ?
I love Miss Churchill ? Ah, no, no.
I view, enchanted, from afar,
And love her as I love a star.
For, not to speak of colder fear,
Which keeps my fancy calm, I hear,
Under her life's gay progress hurl'd,
The wheels of the preponderant world,
Set sharp with swords that fool to slay
Who blunders from a poor byway,
To covet beauty with a crown
Of earthly blessing added on ;
And she's so much, it seems to me,
Beyond all women womanly,
I dread to think how he should fare
Who came so near as to despair.

IV.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

YONDER the sombre vessel rides
Where my obscure condition hides.
Waves scud to shore against the wind,
That flings the sprinkling surf behind ;
In port the bickering pennons show
Which way the ships would gladly go ;
Through Edgecumb Park the rooted trees
Are tossing, reckless, in the breeze ;
On top of Edgecumb's firm-set tower,
As foils, not foibles, of its power,
The light vanes do themselves adjust
To every veering of the gust :
By me alone may nought be given
To guidance of the airs of heaven ?

In battle or peace, in calm or storm,
 Should I my daily task perform,
 (Better a thousand times for love !)
 Who should my secret soul reprove ?

Mother, I've striven to conceal,
 Yes, from myself, how much I feel ;
 In vain. With tears my sight is dull,
 My Cousin makes my heart so full.
 Beholding such as her, a man
 Longs to lay down his life ! How can
 Aught to itself seem thus enough,
 When I have so much need thereof !
 Blest in her place ; blissful is she ;
 And I, departing, seem to be
 Like the strange waif that comes to run
 A few days flaming near the sun,
 And carries back, through boundless night,
 Its lessening memory of light.

Oh, my dear Mother, I confess
 To a weak grief of homelessness,
 Unfelt, save once, before. 'Tis years
 Since such a shower of girlish tears

Disgraced me ! But this wretched Inn,
 At Plymouth, is so full of din,
 Talkings and trappings to and fro.
 And then my ship, to which I go
 To-night, is no more home. I dread,
 As strange, the life I long have led ;
 And as, when first I went to school,
 And found the horror of a rule,
 Which only ask'd to be obey'd,
 I lay and wept, of dawn afraid,
 And thought, with bursting heart, of one
 Who, from her little, wayward son,
 Required obedience, but above
 Obedience still regarded love,
 So change I that enchanting place,
 The abode of innocence and grace
 And gaiety without reproof,
 For the black gun-deck's lowering roof,
 Blind and inevitable law,
 Which makes light duties burdens, awe
 Which is not reverence, laughters gain'd
 At cost of purities profaned,

And whatsoever most may stir
 Remorseful passion towards her,
 Whom to behold is to depart
 From all defect of life and heart.

But, Mother, I shall go on shore,
 And see my Cousin yet once more !
 'Twere wild to hope for her, you say.
 I've torn and cast those words away.
 Surely there's hope ! For life 'tis well
 Love without hope's impossible ;
 So, if I love, it is that hope
 Is not outside the outer scope
 Of fancy. You speak truth : this hour
 I must resist, or lose the power.
 What ! and, when some short months are o'er,
 Be not much other than before ?
 Drop from the high, harmonious sphere -
 In which I'm held but while she's dear ?
 For daily life's dull, senseless mood,
 Slay the sharp nerves of gratitude
 And sweet allegiance, which I owe
 Whether the debt be weal or woe ?

Nay, Mother, I, forewarn'd, prefer
To want for all in wanting her.

For all? Love's best is not bereft
Ever from him to whom is left
The trust that God will not deceive
His creature, fashion'd to believe
The prophecies of pure desire.
Not loss, not death, my love shall tire.
A mystery does my heart foretell ;
Nor do I press the oracle
For explanations. Leave me alone,
And let in me love's will be done.

V.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FASHION'D by Heaven and by art
So is she, that she makes the heart
Ache and o'erflow with tears, that grace
So wonderful should have for place
The unworthy earth ! To see her smile,
As ignorant of her hap the while,
And walk this howling waste of sin,
As only knowing the heaven within,
Is sweet, and does for pity stir
Passion to be her minister ;
Wherefore last night I lay awake,
And said, " Ah, Lord, for thy love's sake,
Give not this darling child of thine
To care less reverent than mine !"

And, as true faith was in my word,
I trust, I trust that I was heard.

The waves, this morning, sped to land,
And shouted hoarse to touch the strand,
Where Spring, that goes not out to sea,
Lay laughing in her lovely glee ;
And, so, my life was sunlit spray
And tumult, as, once more to-day,
For long farewell did I draw near
My Cousin, desperately dear.

Faint, fierce, the truth that hope was none
Gleam'd like the lightning in the sun ;
Yet hope I had, and joy thereof.
The father of love is hope, (though love
Lives orphan'd on, when hope is dead,)
And, out of my immediate dread
And crisis of the coming hour,
Did hope itself draw sudden power.
So the hot-brooding storm, in Spring,
Makes all the birds begin to sing.

Mother, your foresight did not err :
I've lost the world, and not won her.

And yet, ah, laugh not, when you think
 What cup of life I sought to drink !
 The bold, said I, have climb'd to bliss
 Absurd, impossible, as this,
 With nought to help them but so great
 A heart it fascinates their fate.
 If ever Heaven back'd man's desire,
 Mine, being smirchless altar-fire,
 Must come to pass, and it will be
 That she will wait, when she shall see,
 This evening, how I go to get,
 By means unknown, I know not yet
 Quite what, but ground whereon to stand,
 And plead more plainly for her hand !

While thus I raved, and cast in hope
 A superstitious horoscope,
 I reach'd the Dean's. The woman said,
 "Miss Churchill's out." "Had she been dead,"
 I cried, "'twere much the same to me,
 "Who go, this very night, to sea."
 "Nay, Sir, she's only gone to prayer ;
 "And here she comes, across the Square."

(O, but to be the unbanished sod
She daily treads, all fair from God !)

And now, though something in her face
Portended "No !" with such a grace
It burthen'd me with thankfulness,
Nothing was credible but "Yes."
Therefore, through time's close pressure bold,
I praised myself, and boastful told
My deeds at Acre ; strain'd the chance
I had of honour and advance
In war to come ; and would not see
Sad silence meant, "What's this to me !"

When half my precious hour was gone,
She rose to greet a Mr. Vaughan ;
And, as the image of the moon
Breaks up, within some still lagoon
That feels the soft wind suddenly,
Or tide fresh flowing from the sea,
And turns to giddy flames that go
Over the water to and fro,
Thus, when he took her hand to-night,
Her lovely gravity of light

Was scatter'd into many smiles
 And flattering weakness. Hope beguiles
 No more my heart, dear Mother. He,
 By jealous looks, o'erhonour'd me.

With nought to do, and fondly fain
 To hear her singing once again,
 I stay'd, and turn'd her music o'er ;
 Then came she with me to the door.
 "Dearest Honoria," I said,
 (By my despair familiar made,)
 "Heaven bless you !" Oh, to have back then stepp'd,
 And fall'n upon her neck, and wept,
 And said, "My friend, I owe you all
 "I am, and have, and hope for. Call
 "For some poor service ; let me prove
 "To you, or him here whom you love,
 "My duty. Any solemn task,
 "For life's whole course, is all I ask !"
 Then she must surely have wept too,
 And said, "My friend, what can you do !"
 And I should have replied, "I'll pray
 "For you and him three times a-day,

" And, all day, morning, noon, and night,
" My life shall be so high and right
" That never Saint yet scaled the stairs
" Of heaven with more availing prayers !"
But this (and, as good God shall bless
Somehow my end, I'll do no less,
I had no right to speak. Oh, shame,
So rich a love, so poor a claim !

My Mother, now my only friend,
Farewell. The school-books which you send
I shall not want, and so return.
Give them away, or sell, or burn.
I'll write from Malta. Would I might
But be your little Child to-night,
And feel your arms about me fold,
Against this loneliness and cold !

VI.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

THE folly of young girls ! They doff
Their pride to smooth success, and scoff
At far more noble fire and might
That woo them from the dust of fight !
But, Frederick, now the storm is past,
Your sky should not remain o'ercast.
A sea-life's dull, and, oh, beware
Of nourishing, for zest, despair.
My Child, remember, you have twice
Now been in love ; then why not thrice,
Or ten times ? But a wise man shuns
To cry " All's over," more than once.
I'll not say that a young man's soul
Is scarcely measure of the whole

Earthly and heavenly universe,
 To which he inveterately prefers
 The one beloved woman. Best
 Speak to the senses' interest,
 Which brooks no mystery nor delay :
 Frankly reflect, my Son, and say,
 Was there no secret hour, of those
 Pass'd at her side in Sarum Close,
 When, to your spirit's sick alarm,
 It seem'd that all her marvellous charm
 Was marvellously fled ? Her grace
 Of voice, adornment, movement, face
 Was what already heart and eye
 Had ponder'd to satiety ;
 And so the good of life was o'er,
 Until some laugh not heard before,
 Some novel fashion in her hair,
 Or style of putting back her chair,
 Restored the heavens. Gather thence
 The loss-consoling inference.

No blame to beauty ! It beguiles,
 With lovely motions and sweet smiles,

Which while they please us pass away,
The spirit to lofty thoughts that stay,
And lift the whole of after-life,
Unless you take the vision to wife,
Which then seems nought, or serves to slake
Desire, as when a lovely lake
Far off scarce fills the exulting eye
Of one athirst, who comes thereby,
And inappreciably sips
The deep, with disappointed lips.
To fail is sorrow, yet confess
That love pays dearly for success !
No blame to beauty ! Let's complain
Of the heart, which can so ill sustain
Delight. Our griefs declare our Fall,
But how much more our joys ! They pall
With plucking, and celestial mirth
Can find no footing on the earth,
More than the bird of paradise,
Which only lives the while it flies.

Think, also, how 'twould suit your pride
To have this woman for a bride

Whate'er her faults, she's one of those
 To whom the world's last polish owes
 A novel grace, which all who aspire
 To courtliest custom must acquire.
 The world's the sphere she's made to charm,
 Which you have shunn'd as if 'twere harm.
 Oh, law perverse, that loneliness
 Breeds love, society success !
 Though young, 'twere now o'er late in life
 To train yourself for such a wife ;
 So she would suit herself to you,
 As women, when they marry, do.
 For, since 'tis for our dignity
 Our lords should sit like lords on high,
 We willingly deteriorate
 To a step below our rulers' state ;
 And 'tis the commonest of things
 To see an angel, gay with wings,
 Lean weakly on a mortal's arm !
 Honoria would put off the charm
 Of lofty grace that caught your love,
 For fear you should not seem above

Herself in fashion and degree,
As in true merit. Thus, you see,
'Twere little kindness, wisdom none,
To light your cot with such a sun.

VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

DO not, dear Mother, write her name
With the least word or hint of blame.
Who else shall discommend her choice,
I giving it my hearty voice?
She marry me? I loved too well
To think it good or possible.
Ah, never near her beauties come
The business of the narrow home!
Far fly from her dear face, that shows
The sunshine lovelier than the rose,
The sordid gravity they wear
Who poverty's base burthen bear!
(And they are poor who come to miss
Their custom, though a crown be this.)

My hope was, that the wheels of fate,
 For my exceeding need, might wait,
 And she, unseen amidst all eyes,
 Move sightless, till I sought the prize,
 With honour, in an equal field.
 But then came Vaughan, to whom I yield
 With grace as much as any man,
 In such cause, to another can.
 Had she been mine, it seems to me
 That I had that integrity
 And only joy in her delight—
 But each is his own favourite
 In love ! The thought to bring me rest
 Is that of us she takes the best.

'Twas but to see him to be sure
 That choice for her remain'd no more !
 His brow, so gaily clear of craft ;
 His wit, the timely truth that laugh'd
 To find itself so well express'd ;
 His words, abundant yet the best ;
 His spirit, of such handsome show
 You mark'd not that his looks were so ;

His bearing, prospects, birth, all these
 Might well, with small suit, greatly please ;
 How greatly, when she saw arise
 The reflex sweetness of her eyes
 In his, and every breath defer
 Humbly its bated life to her ;
 Whilst power and kindness of command,
 Which women can no more withstand
 Than we their grace, were still unquell'd,
 And force and flattery both compell'd
 Her softness ! Say I'm worthy. I
 Grew, in her presence, cold and shy.
 It awed me, as an angel's might
 In raiment of reproachful light.
 Her gay looks told my sombre mood
 That what's not happy is not good ;
 And, just because 'twas life to please,
 Death to repel her, truth and ease
 Deserted me ; I strove to talk,
 And stammer'd foolishness ; my walk
 Was like a drunkard's ; if she took
 My arm, it stiffen'd, ached, and shook ;

I guess'd her thought, and could have dropp'd ;
 The streams of life within me stopp'd.
 A likely wooer ! Blame her not ;
 Nor ever say, dear Mother, aught
 Against that perfectness which is
 My strength, as once it was my bliss.

And do not chafe at social rules.
 Leave that to poets and to fools.
 Clay graffs and clods conceive the rose,
 So base still fathers best. Life owes
 Itself to bread ; enough thereof
 And easy days condition love ;
 And, highly train'd, love's roses thrive,
 No more pale, scentless petals five,
 Which moisten the considerate eye
 To see what haste they make to die,
 But heavens of colour and perfume,
 Which, month by month, renew the bloom
 Of art-born graces, when the year
 In all the natural grove is sere.

Thank God, I partly can descry
 The meaning of humanity !

In sight of him who sees it float
As many an isolated mote
In accidental light or dark,
And wants the instructed eye to mark
Its method, and the ear to hear
The moving music of its sphere,
What wonder if his private loss
Seem an intolerable cross,
Not to be suffer'd, in mere awe
Of what he calls the world's cold law.
But he who once, with joy of soul,
Has had the vision of the whole,
Though to the wringing of his heart,
Will never more prefer the part.
Blame none, then ! Bright let be the air
About my lonely cloud of care.

VIII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

RELIGION, duty, books, work, friends,—
 'Tis good advice, but there it ends.
I'm sick for what these have not got.
Send no more books ; they help me not ;
And, as for work, Mother, I find
The life of man is in his mind,
Though, trust the strains the fashion strums,
It seems 'tis rather in his thumbs !
I act my calling, yet there's still
A void which duty cannot fill.
What though the inaugural hour of right
Comes ever with a keen delight ?

Little relieves the labour's heat,
 Or crowns the labour when complete ;
 And life, in fact, is not less dull
 For being very dutiful.
 "The stately homes of England," lo,
 "How beautiful they stand !" They owe
 How much to nameless things like me
 Their beauty of security !
 But who can long a low work mend
 By looking to a lofty end ?
 And let me, since 'tis truth, confess
 The gap's not fill'd by godliness.
 God is a tower without a stair,
 And His perfection love's despair.
 'Tis He shall judge me when I die ;
 He suckles with the hissing fly
 The spider ; gazes patient down,
 Whilst rapine grips the helpless town.
 His vast love holds all this and more.
 In consternation I adore.

Nor can I ease this aching gulf
With friends, the pictures of myself.

Then marvel not that I recur
From each and all of these to her.
For more of heaven than her have I
No sensitive capacity.

Had I but her, ah, what the gain
Of owning aught but that domain !
Nay, heaven's extent, however much,
Cannot be more than many such ;
And, she being mine, should God to me
Say "Lo ! my Child, I give to thee
All heaven besides," what could I then,
But, as a child, to Him complain
That whereas my dear Father gave
A little space for me to have
In his great garden, now, o'erblest,
I've that, indeed, but all the rest,
Which, somehow, makes it seem I've got
All but my only cared-for plot.

Enough was that for my weak hand
To tend, my heart to understand.

Oh, the sick thought, 'twixt her and me
There's nothing, and the weary sea !

Nor can I ease this aching gulf
 With friends, the pictures of myself.

Then marvel not that I recur
 From each and all of these to her.
 For more of heaven than her have I
 No sensitive capacity.

Had I but her, ah, what the gain
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 But, as a child, to Him complain
 That whereas my dear Father gave
 A little space for me to have
 In his great garden, now, o'erblest,
 I've that, indeed, but all the rest,
 Which, somehow, makes it seem I've
 All but my only —

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IX.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, in less than two hours more
I set my foot on English shore,
Two years untrod, and, strange to tell,
Nigh miss'd through last night's storm. There fell
A man from the shrouds, that roar'd to quench
Even the billows' blast and drench.
Besides me none was near to mark
His loud cry in the louder dark,
Dark, save when lightning show'd the deeps
Standing about in stony heaps.
No time for choice ! A fortunate flash
Flamed as he rose ; a dizzy splash,
A strange, inopportune delight
Of mounting with the billowy might,

And falling, with a thrill again
 Of pleasure shot from feet to brain,
 And both paced deck, ere any knew
 Our peril. Round us press'd the crew.
 "Your duty was to let him drown,"
 The Captain said, and feign'd a frown ;
 But wonder fill'd the eyes of most,
 As if the man who had loved and lost
 Honoria dared no more than that !

My days have else been stale and flat.
 This life's at best, if justly scann'd,
 A tedious walk by the other's strand,
 With, here and there cast up, a piece
 Of coral or of ambergris.
 I seldom write, for 'twould be still
 Of how the nerves refuse to thrill ;
 How, throughout doubly-darken'd days,
 I cannot recollect her face ;
 How to my heart her name to tell
 Is beating on a broken bell ;
 And, to fill up the abhorrent gulf,
 Scarce loving her, I hate myself.

Yet, latterly, with strange delight,
Rich tides have risen in the night,
And sweet dreams chased the fancies dense
Of waking life's dull somnolence.
I see her as I knew her, grace
Already glory in her face ;
I move about, I cannot rest,
For the proud brain and joyful breast
I have of her. Or else I float,
The pilot of an idle boat,
Alone, alone with sky and sea,
And her, the third simplicity.
Or Mildred, to some question, cries,
(Her merry mischief in her eyes),
" The Ball, oh, Frederick will go ;
" Honoria will be there !" and, lo,
As moisture sweet my seeing blurs
To hear my name so link'd with hers,
A mirror joins, by guilty chance,
Either's averted, watchful glance !
Or with me, in the Ball-Room's blaze,
Her brilliant mildness thrids the maze ;

Our thoughts are lovely, and each word
 Is music in the music heard,
 And all things seem but parts to be
 Of one persistent harmony,
 By which I'm made divinely bold ;
 The secret, which she knows, is told ;
 And, laughing with a lofty bliss
 Of innocent accord, we kiss ;
 About her neck my pleasure weeps ;
 Against my lip the silk vein leaps ;
 Then says an Angel, " Day or night,
 " If yours you seek, not her delight,
 " Although by some strange witchery
 " It seems you kiss her, 'tis not she ;
 " But whilst you languish at the side
 " Of a fair-foul phantasmal bride,
 " Surely a dragon and strong tower
 " Guard the true lady in her bower."
 And I say, " Dear my Lord, Amen !"

And the true lady kiss again.
 Or else some wasteful malady
 Devours her shape and dims her eye ;

No charms are left, where all were rife,
Except her voice, which is her life,
Wherewith she, for her foolish fear,
Says trembling, "Do you love me, Dear f"
And I reply, "Sweetest, I vow
"I never loved but half till now."
She turns her face to the wall at this,
And says, "Go, Love, 'tis too much bliss."
And then a sudden pulse is sent
About the sounding firmament
In smittings as of silver bars ;
The bright disorder of the stars
Is solved by music ; far and near,
Through infinite distinctions clear,
Their two-fold voices' deeper tone
Utters the Name which all things own,
And each ecstatic treble dwells
On one whereof none other tells ;
And we, sublimed to song and fire,
Take order in the wheeling quire,
Till from the throbbing sphere I start,
Waked by the beating of my heart.

Such dreams as these come night by night,
 Disturbing day with their delight.
 Portend they nothing ? Who can tell !
 God yet may do some miracle.
 'Tis nigh two years, and she's not wed,
 Or you would know ! He may be dead,
 Or mad, and loving some one else,
 And she, much moved that nothing quells
 My constancy, or, simply wroth
 With such a wretch, accept my troth
 To spite him ; or her beauty's gone,
 (And that's my dream !) and this vile Vaughan
 Takes her release ; or tongues malign,
 Confusing all men's ears but mine,
 Have smirch'd her : ah, 'twould move her, sure,
 To find I loved her more and more !
 Nay, now I think, haply amiss
 I read her words and looks, and his
 That night ! Did not his jealousy
 Show—Good my God, and can it be
 That I, a modest fool, all blest,
 Nothing of such a heaven guess'd ?

Oh, chance too frail, yet frantic sweet,
To-morrow sees me at her feet !

Yonder, at last, the glad sea roars
Along the sacred English shores !
There lies the lovely land I know,
Where men and women lordliest grow ;
There peep the roofs where more than kings
Postpone state cares to country things,
And many a gay queen simply tends
The babes on whom the world depends ;
There curls the wanton cottage smoke
Of him that drives but bears no yoke ;
There laughs the realm where low and high
Are lieges to society,
And life has all too wide a scope,
Too free a prospect for its hope,
For any private good or ill,
Except dishonour, quite to fill !

—Mother, since this was penn'd, I've read
That " Mr. Vaughan, on Tuesday, wed
" The beautiful Miss Churchill." So
That's over ; and to-morrow I go

To take up my new post on board
 The Wolf, my peace at last restored ;
 My lonely faith, like hart-of-oak,
 Shock-season'd. Grief is now the cloak
 I clasp about me to prevent
 The deadly chill of a content
 With any near or distant good,
 Except the exact beatitude
 Which love has shown to my desire !
 Talk not of " other joys and higher,"
 I hate and disavow all bliss
 As none for me which is not this.
 Think not I blasphemously cope
 With God's decrees, and cast off hope.
 How, when, and where can mine succeed ?
 I'll trust He knows who made my need.

Baseness of men ! Pursuit being o'er,
 Doubtless her Husband feels no more
 The heaven of heavens of such a Bride,
 But, lounging, lets her please his pride
 With fondness, guerdons her caress
 With little names, and turns a tress

Round idle fingers. If 'tis so,
Why then I'm happier of the two !
Better, for lofty loss, high pain,
Than low content with lofty gain.
Poor, foolish Dove, to trust from me
Her happiness and dignity !

X.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

I THOUGHT the worst had brought me balm :
"Twas but the tempest's central calm.

Vague sinkings of the heart aver
That dreadful wrong is come to her,
And o'er this dream I brood and doat,
And learn its agonies by rote.
As if I loved it, early and late
I make familiar with my fate,
And feed, with fascinated will,
On very dregs of finish'd ill.
I think, she's near him now, alone,
With wardship and protection none ;
Alone, perhaps, in the hindering stress
Of airs that clasp him with her dress,

They wander whispering by the wave ;
 And haply now, in some sea-cave,
 Where the ribb'd sand is rarely trod,
 They laugh, they kiss. Oh, God ! oh, God !

There comes a smile acutely sweet
 Out of the picturing dark ; I meet
 The ancient frankness of her gaze,
 That soft and heart-surprising blaze
 Of great goodwill and innocence,
 And perfect joy proceeding thence !
 Ah ! made for Earth's delight, yet such
 The mid-sea air's too gross to touch.
 At thought of which, the soul in me
 Is as the bird that bites a bee,
 And darts abroad on frantic wing,
 Tasting the honey and the sting ;
 And, moaning where all round me sleep
 Amidst the moaning of the deep,
 I start at midnight from my bed—
 And have no right to strike him dead.

What world is this that I am in;
 Where chance turns sanctity to sin !

'Tis crime henceforward to desire
 The only good, the sacred fire
 That sunn'd the universe is hell !
 I hear a Voice which argues well :
 " The Heaven hard has scorn'd your cry ;
 " Fall down and worship me, and I
 " Will give you peace ; go and profane
 " This pangful love, so pure, so vain,
 And thereby win forgetfulness
 And pardon of the spirit's excess,
 Which soar'd too nigh that jealous Heaven
 " Ever, save thus, to be forgiven.
 " No Gospel has come down that cures
 " With better gain a loss like yours.
 " Be pious ! Give the beggar pelf,
 " And love your neighbour as yourself !
 " You, who yet love, though all is o'er,
 " And she'll ne'er be your neighbour more,
 " With soul which can in pity smile
 " That aught with such a measure vile
 " As self should be at all named 'love !'
 " Your sanctity the priests reprove ;

" Your case of grief they wholly miss ;
 " The Man of Sorrows names not this !
 " ' The years,' they say, ' graff love divine
 " ' On the lopp'd stock of love like thine,
 " ' The wild tree dies not, but converts.'
 " So be it ; but the lopping hurts,
 " The graft takes tardily ! Men stanch
 " Meantime with earth the bleeding branch.
 " There's nothing heals one woman's loss,
 " And lightens life's eternal cross
 " With intermission of sound rest,
 " Like lying in another's breast.
 " The cure is, to your thinking, low !
 " Is not life all, henceforward, so ? "

Ill Voice, at least thou calm'st my mood
 I'll sleep ! But, as I thus conclude,
 The intrusions of her grace dispel
 The comfortable glooms of hell.

A wonder ! Ere these lines were dried,
 Vaughan and my Love, his ten-days' Bride,
 Became my guests. I look'd, and, lo,
 In beauty soft as is the snow

And powerful as the avalanche,
 She cross'd the deck. The Heav'n-sent chance !
 She smiled, surprised. They came to see
 The ship, not thinking to meet me.

At infinite distance she's my day !
 What then to him ! Howbeit they say
 'Tis not so sunny in the sun
 But men might live cool lives thereon !

All's well ; for I have seen arise
 That reflex sweetness of her eyes
 In his, and watch'd his breath defer
 Humbly its bated life to her,
 His *wife*. Dear Love, she's safe in his
 Devotion ! What ask'd I but this ?

They bade adieu ; I saw them go
 Across the sea ; and now I know
 The ultimate hope I rested on,
 The hope beyond the grave, is gone,
 The hope that, in the heavens high,
 At last it should appear that I
 Loved most, and so, by claim divine,
 Should have her, in the heavens, for mine,

According to such nuptial sort
As may subsist in the holy court,
Where, if there are all kinds of joys
To exhaust the multitude of choice
In many mansions, then there are
Loves personal and particular,
Conspicuous in the glorious sky
Of universal charity,
As Phosphor in the sunrise. Now
I've seen them, I believe their vow
Immortal ; and the dreadful thought,
That he less honour'd than he ought
Her sanctity, is laid to rest,
And, blessing them, I too am blest.
My goodwill, as a springing air,
Unclouds a beauty in despair ;
I stand beneath the sky's pure cope
Unburthen'd even by a hope ;
And peace unspeakable, a joy
Which hope would deaden and destroy,
Like sunshine fills the airy gulf
Left by the vanishing of self.

That I have known her ; that she moves
Somewhere all-graceful ; that she loves,
And is belov'd, and that she's so
Most happy.; and to heaven will go,
Where I may meet with her, (yet this
I count but adventitious bliss,)
And that the full, celestial weal
Of all shall sensitively feel
The partnership and work of each,
And, thus, my love and labour reach
Her region, there the more to bless
Her last, consummate happiness,
Is guerdon up to the degree
Of that alone true loyalty
Which, sacrificing, is not nice
About the terms of sacrifice,
But offers all, with smiles that say,
"Tis little, but it is for aye !

XI.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

YOU wanted her, my Son, for wife,
With the fierce need of life in life.
That nobler passion of an hour
Was rather prophecy than power ;
And nature, from such stress unbent,
Rekurs to deep discouragement.
Trust not such peace yet ; easy breath,
In hot diseases, argues death ;
And tastelessness within the mouth
Worse fever shows than heat or drouth.
Wherefore take, Frederick, timely fear
Against a novel danger near :
Beware lest that " ill Voice " once more
Persuade, not vainly as before.

Wed not one woman, oh, my Son,
Because you love another one !
Oft, with a disappointed man,
The first who cares to win him can ;
For, after love's heroic strain,
Which tired the heart and brought no gain,
He feels consoled, relieved, and eased
To meet with her who can be pleased
To proffer kindness, and compute
His acquiescence for pursuit ;
Who troubles not his lonely mood ;
Asks naught for love but gratitude ;
And, as it were, will let him weep
Himself within her arms to sleep.
Ah, desperate folly ! Yet, we know,
Who wed through love wed mostly so.

At least, my Child, when wed you do,
See that the woman equals you,
Nor rush, from having loved too high,
Into a worse humility.
Whose Son, whose *Cousin* are you ? Wait
Until this blast shall well abate !

Though love may seem to have wreck'd your life,
Look to the salvage; take no wife
Who to your stooping feels she owes
Her name ; such debts make bosom-foes.

A poor estate's a foolish plea
For marrying to a base degree.
Think not grown women can be train'd,
Or, if they could, that much were gain'd ;
For, never was a man's heart caught
By graces he himself had taught.
And fancy not 'tis in the might
Of man to do without delight ;
For, should you in her nothing find,
To exhilarate the higher mind,
Your soul will deaden useless wings
With wickedness of lawful things,
And vampire pleasure swift destroy
Even the memory of joy.
So let no man, in desperate mood,
Wed a dull girl because she's good.
All virtues in his wife soon dim,
Except the power of pleasing him,

Which may small virtue be, or none !

I know my just and tender Son,
 To whom the dangerous grace is given
 That scorns a good which is not heaven ;
 My Child, who used to sit and sigh
 Under the bright, ideal sky,
 And pass, to spare the farmer's wheat,
 The poppy and the meadow-sweet !
 He would not let his wife's heart ache
 For what was mainly his mistake ;
 But, having err'd so, all his force
 Would fix upon the hard, right course.

She's graceless, say, yet good and true,
 And therefore inward fair, and, through
 The veils which inward beauty swathe,
 All lovely to the eye of faith !
 Ah, that's soon tired ; faith falls away,
 Without the ceremonial stay
 Of outward loveliness and awe.
 The weightier matters of the law
 She pays ; mere mint and cummin not ;
 And, in the road that she was taught,

She treads, and takes for granted still
Nature's immedicable ill ;
So never wears within her eyes
A false report of paradise,
Nor ever modulates her mirth
With vain compassion of the earth,
Which made a certain happier face
Affecting, and a gayer grace
With pathos delicately edged !
Yet, though she be not privileged
To unlock for you your heart's delight,
(Her keys being gold, but not the right,)
On lower levels she may do !
Her joy is more in loving you
Than being loved, and she commands
All tenderness she understands.
It is but when you proffer more
The yoke weighs heavy and chafes sore.
It's weary work enforcing love
On one who has enough thereof,
And honour on the lowlihead
Of ignorance ! Besides, you dread,

In Leah's arms, to meet the eyes
 Of Rachel, somewhere in the skies,
 And both return, alike relieved,
 To life less loftily conceived.
 Alas, alas !

Then wait the mood
 In which a woman may be woo'd
 Whose thoughts and habits are too high
 For honour to be flattery,
 And who would surely not allow
 The suit that you could proffer now.
 Her equal yoke would sit with ease ;
 It might, with wearing, even please,
 (Not with a better word to move
 The indignant loyalty of love !)
 She would not mope when you were gay,
 For want of knowing aught to say ;
 Nor vex you with unhandsome waste
 Of thoughts ill-timed and words ill-
 placed ;
 Nor reckon small things duties small,
 And your fine sense fantastical ;
 But, gilding uses with delight,

And comprehending nature right,
 Would mend or veil each weaker part
 With some sweet supplement of art.
 Nor would she bring you up a brood
 Of strangers bound to you by blood,
 Boys of a meaner moral race,
 Girls with their mother's evil grace,
 But not her right to sometimes find
 Her critic past his judgment kind ;
 Nor, unaccustom'd to respect,
 Which men, where 'tis not claim'd, neglect,
 Confirm you selfish and morose,
 And slowly, by contagion, gross ;
 But, glad and able to receive
 The honour you would long to give,
 Would hasten on to justify
 Your hope of her, however high,
 Whilst you would happily incur
 Compulsion to keep up with her.

Your love was wild, but none the less
 Praise be to love, whose wild excess
 Reveals the honour and the height
 Of life, and the supreme delight

In store for all but him who lies
Content in mediocrities !
Many men cannot love ; more yet
Cannot love such as they can get.
To wed with one less loved may be
Part of divine expediency.

XII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

YOUR letter, Mother, bears the date
Of six months back, and comes too late.
My Love, past all conceiving lost,
A change seem'd good, at any cost,
From lonely, stupid, silent grief,
Vain, objectless, beyond relief,
And, like a sea-fog, settled dense
On fancy, feeling, thought, and sense.
I grew so idle, so despised
Myself, my powers, by Her unprized ;
Honouring my post, but nothing more ;
And lying, when I lived on shore,
So late of mornings ; sharp tears stream'd
For such slight cause,—if only gleam'd,

Remotely, beautifully bright,
 On clouded eves at sea, the light
 Of English headlands in the sun,—
 That soon I deem'd 'twere better done
 To lay this poor, complaining wraith
 Of unreciprocated faith ;
 And so, with heart still bleeding quick,
 But strengthen'd by the comfort sick
 Of knowing that *She* could not care,
 I turn'd away from my despair ;
 And told our chaplain's daughter, Jane,—
 A dear, good girl, who saw my pain,
 And look'd as if she pitied me,—
 How glad and thankful I should be
 If some kind woman, not above
 Myself in rank, would give her love
 To one that knew not how to woo.
 Whereat she, without more ado,
 Blush'd, spoke of love return'd, and closed
 With what I meant to have proposed.

And, trust me, Mother, I and Jane,
 We suit each other well. My gain

Is very great in this good Wife,
 To whom I'm bound, for natural life,
 By hearty faith, yet crossing not
 My faith towards—I know not what !
 As to the ether is the air,
 Is her good to Honoria's fair ;
 One place is full of both, yet each
 Lies quite beyond the other's reach
 And recognition.

If you say,

Am I contented ? Yea and nay !
 For what's base but content to grow
 With less good than the best we know ?
 But think me not from life withdrawn,
 By passion for a hope that's gone,
 So far as to forget how much
 A woman is, as merely such,
 To man's affection. What is best,
 In each, belongs to all the rest ;
 And though, in marriage, quite to kiss
 And half to love the custom is,
 'Tis such dishonour, ruin bare,
 The soul's interior despair,

And life between two troubles toss'd,
 To me, who think not with the most ;
 Whatever 'twould have been, before
 My Cousin's time, 'tis now so sore
 A treason to the abiding throne
 Of that sweet love which I have known,
 I cannot live so, and I bend
 My mind perforce to comprehend
 That He who gives command to love
 Does not require a thing above
 The strength He gives. The highest degree
 Of the hardest grace, humility ;
 The step t'ward heaven the latest trod,
 And that which makes us most like God,
 And us much more than God behoves,
 Is, to be humble in our loves.
 Henceforth for ever therefore I
 Renounce all partiality
 Of passion. Subject to control
 Of that perspective of the soul
 Which God Himself pronounces good,
 Confirming claims of neighbourhood,

And giving man, for earthly life,
 The closest neighbour in a wife,
 I'll serve all. Jane be much more dear
 Than others as she's much more near !

Is one unloveable, and would
 We love him, let us do him good !
 How easy, then, the effect to raise
 Where nought's amiss but homely ways.
 I love her ! Yea, and love's joy comes
 Of all our self-love's martyrdoms !

Yet, not to lie for God, 'tis true
 That 'twas another joy I knew
 When freighted was my heart with fire
 Of fond, irrational desire
 For fascinating, female charms,
 And hopeless heaven in Her mild arms
 Nor wrong I any, if I profess
 That care for heaven with me were less
 But that I'm utterly imbued
 With faith of all Earth's hope renew'd
 In realms where no short-coming pains
 Expectance, and dear love disdains

Time's treason, and the gathering dross,
 And lasts for ever in the gloss
 Of newness.

 All the bright past seems
 Now, but a vision in my dreams,
 Which shows, albeit the dreamer wakes,
 The standard of right life. Life aches
 To be therewith conform'd ; but, oh,
 The world's so stolid, dark, and low !
 That and the mortal element
 Forbid the beautiful intent,
 And, like the unborn butterfly,
 It feels the wings, and wants the sky.

 But perilous is the lofty mood
 Which cannot pull with lowly good !
 Right life, for me, is life that wends
 By lowly ways to lofty ends.
 I well perceive, at length, that haste
 T'ward heaven itself is only waste ;
 And thus I dread the impatient spur
 Of aught that speaks too plain of Her.
 There's little here that story tells ;
 But music talks of nothing else.

Therefore, when music breathes, I say,
 (And busier urge my task,) Away!
 Thou art the voice of one I knew,
 But what thou say'st is not yet true;
 Thou art the voice of her I loved,
 And I would not be vainly moved.

Thus Love, which did from death set free
 All things, now dons death's mockery,
 And takes its place with things that are
 But little noted. Do not mar
 For me your peace! My health is high.
 The proud possession of mine eye
 Departed, I am much like one
 Who had by haughty custom grown
 To think gilt rooms, and spacious grounds,
 Horses, and carriages, and hounds,
 Fine linen, and an eider bed
 As much his need as daily bread,
 And honour of men as much or more;
 Till, strange misfortune smiting sore,
 His pride all goes to pay his debts,
 A lodging anywhere he gets,

And takes his family thereto
 Weeping, and other relics few,
 Allow'd, by them that seize his pelf,
 As precious only to himself.
 Yet the sun shines ; the country green
 Has many riches, poorly seen
 From blazon'd coaches ; grace at meat
 Goes well with thrift in what they eat ;
 And there's amends for much bereft
 In better thanks for much that's left !

She is not fair, yet pleases well
 The eye in which no others dwell ;
 And features somewhat plainly set,
 And homely manners leave her yet
 The crowning boon and most express
 Of Heaven's inventive tenderness,
 A woman. But I do her wrong,
 Letting the world's eyes guide my tongue !
 She has a handsomeness that pays
 No homage to the hourly gaze,
 And dwells not on the arch'd brow's height
 And lids which softly lodge the light,

Nor in the pure field of the cheek
Flowers, though the soul be still to seek ;
But shows as fits that solemn place
Whereof the window is the face :
Blankness and leaden outlines mark
What time the Church within is dark ;
Yet view it on a Sunday night,
Or some occasion else for light,
And each ungainly line is seen
Some special character to mean
Of Saint or Prophet, and the whole
Blank window is a living scroll.

For hours, the clock upon the shelf,
Has all the talking to itself ;
But to and fro her needle runs
Twice, while the clock is ticking once ;
And, when a wife is well in reach,
Not silence separates, but speech ;
And I, contented, read, or smoke
And idly think, or idly stroke
The winking cat, or watch the fire,
In social peace that does not tire ;

Until, at easeful end of day,
 She moves, and puts her work away,
 And, saying "How cold 'tis," or "How warm,"
 Or something else as little harm,
 Comes, used to finding, kindly press'd,
 A woman's welcome to my breast,
 With all the great advantage clear
 Of none else having been so near.

But sometimes, (how shall I deny !)
 There falls, with her thus sitting by,
 Dejection, and a chilling shade.
 Remember'd pleasures, as they fade,
 Salute me, and, in fading, grow,
 Like foot-prints in the thawing snow.
 I feel oppress'd beyond my force
 With foolish envy and remorse.
 I love this woman, but I might
 Have loved some else with more delight ;
 And strange it seems of God that he
 Should make a vain capacity.

Such times of ignorant relapse,
 'Tis well she does not talk, perhaps.

The dream, the discontent, the doubt,
To some injustice flaming out,
Were't else, might leave us both to moan
A kind tradition overthrown,
And dawning promise once more dead
In the pernicious lowlihead
Of not aspiring to be fair.
And what am I that I should dare
Dispute with God, who moulds one clay
To honour and shame, and wills to pay
With equal wages them that delve
About his vines one hour or twelve !

.

XIII.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

I'VE dreadful news, my Sister dear !
Frederick has married, as we hear,
Oh, *such* a girl ! This fact we get
From Mr. Barton, whom we met
At Abury once. He used to know,
At Race and Hunt, Lord Clitheroe,
And writes that he "has seen Fred Graham,
"Commander of the Wolf,—the same
"The Mess call'd Joseph,—with his Wife
"Under his arm." He "lays his life,
"The fellow married her for love,
"For there was nothing else to move.
"H. is her Shibboleth. 'Tis said
"Her Mother was a Kitchen-Maid."

Poor Fred ! What *will* Honoria say ?
 She thought so highly of him. . Pray
 Tell it her gently. I've no right,
 I know you hold, to trust my sight ;
 But Frederick's state could not be hid !
 And Felix, coming when he did,
 Was lucky ; for Honoria, too,
 Was half in love. How warm she grew
 On "worldliness," when once I said
 I fancied that, in ladies, Fred
 Had tastes much better than his means !
 His hand was worthy of a Queen's,
 Said she, and actually shed tears
 The night he left us for two years,
 And sobb'd, when ask'd the cause to tell,
 That " Frederick look'd so miserable."
 He *did* look very dull, no doubt,
 But such things girls don't cry about.

What weathercocks men always prove !
 You're quite right not to fall in love.
 I never did, and, truth to tell,
 I don't think it respectable.

The man can't understand it, too.
He likes to be in love with you,
But scarce knows how, if you love him,
Poor fellow ! When 'tis woman's whim
To serve her husband night and day,
The kind soul lets her have her way !
So, if you wed, as soon you should,
Be selfish for your husband's good.
Happy the men who relegate
Their pleasures, vanities, and state
To *us*. Their nature seems to be
To enjoy themselves by deputy,
For, seeking their own benefit,
Dear, what a mess they make of it !
A man will work his bones away,
If but his wife will only play ;
He does not mind how much he's teased,
So that his plague looks always pleased ;
And never thanks her, while he lives,
For anything, but what he gives !
It's hard to manage men, we hear !
Believe me, nothing's easier, Dear.

The most important step by far
Is finding what their colours are.
The next is, not to let them know
The reason why they love us so.
The indolent droop of a blue shawl,
Or grey silk's fluctuating fall,
Covers the multitude of sins
In me. *Your* husband, Love, might wince
At azure, and be wild at slate,
And yet do well with chocolate.
Of course you'd let him fancy he
Adored you for your piety.

There, now I've said enough, my Dear,
To make you hate me for a year.
You need not write to tell me so.
Yours fondly, MILDRED CLITHEROE.

XIV.

JANE TO HER MOTHER.

DEAR Mother, as you write, I see
How glad and thankful I should be
For such a husband. Yet to tell
The truth, I am so miserable !
How could he—I remember, though,
He never said he loved me ! No,
He is so right that all seems wrong
I've done and thought my whole life long !
I'm grown so dull and dead with fear
That Yes and No, when he is near,
Is all I have to say. He's quite
Unlike what most would call polite,
And yet, when first I saw him come
To tea in Aunt's fine drawing-room,

He made me feel so common ! Oh,
 How dreadful if he thinks me so !
 It's no use trying to behave
 To him. His eye, so kind and grave,
 Sees through and through me ! Could not you,
 Without his knowing that I knew,
 Ask him to scold me now and then ?
 Mother, it's such a weary strain
 The way he has of treating me
 As if 'twas something fine to be
 A woman ; and appearing not
 To notice any faults I've got !
 I know he knows I'm plain, and small,
 Stupid, and ignorant, and all
 Awkward and mean ; and, by degrees,
 I see a beauty which he sees,
 When often he looks strange awhile,
 Then recollects me with a smile.

I wish he had that fancied Wife,
 With me for maid, now ! all my life
 To dress her out for him, and make
 Her look the lovelier for his sake ;

To have her rate me till I cried ;
 Then see her seated by his side,
 And driven off proudly to the Ball ;
 Then to stay up for her, whilst all
 The servants were asleep ; and hear
 At dawn the carriage rolling near,
 And let them in ; and hear her laugh,
 And boast he said that none was half
 So beautiful, and that the Queen,
 Who danced with him the first, had seen
 And noticed her, and ask'd who was
 That lady in the golden gauze ?
 And then to go to bed, and lie
 In a sort of heavenly jealousy,
 Until 'twas broad day, and I guess'd
 She slept, nor knew how she was bless'd.

Mother, I look and feel so ill ;
 And soon I shall be uglier still,
 You know. But I have heard that men
 Never think women ugly then.
 Pray burn this letter. I would not
 Complain, but for the fear I've got

Of going wild, as we hear tell
 Of people shut up in a cell,
 With no one there to talk to. He,
 Must never know he is loved by me
 The most ; he'd think himself to blame ;
 And I should almost die for shame.

When I get up,—that now at seven,
 And 'tis not light,—my heart's like heaven
 At times ; for I've a foolish whim
 That Fred loves me as I love him,
 And that, though neither fair nor wise,
 Love, somehow, makes a woman nice.
 But daylight makes the glass reflect
 The fact ; and then I recollect
 How strangely in the night things seem
 Which are not, though we do not dream.

If being good would serve—but oh,
 The thought's ridiculous, you know.
 Why I, myself, I never could
 See what's in women's being good.
 They've nothing in the world to do
 But what their nature tells them to.

Now, when a man, you know, does right,
He has to try with all his might.

Though true and kind in deed and word,
Fred's not a vessel of the Lord.
But I have hopes of him ; for, oh,
How can we ever surely know
But that the very darkest place
May be the scene of saving grace !

XV.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, all's well ! The little wight
Fill'd me, unfatherly, with fright,
So grim it gazed, and, out of the sky,
There came, minute, remote, the cry,
Piercing, of original pain.
I put the wonder back to Jane,
Who proffer'd, as in kindly course,
Untried amends for strange divorce.
It guess'd at once, by great good luck,
The clever baby, how to suck !
Yet her delight seem'd dash'd, that I,
Of strangers still by nature shy,
Was not familiar quite so soon
With her small friend of many a moon.

But, when the new-made Mother smiled,
She seem'd herself a little child,
Dwelling at large beyond the law
By which, till then, I judged and saw,
And that fond glow which she felt stir
For it, suffused my heart for her ;
To whom, from the weak babe, and thence
To me, an influent innocence,
Happy, reparative of life,
Came, and she was indeed my wife,
As there, lovely with love she lay,
Brightly contented all the day
To hug her sleepy little boy,
In the reciprocated joy
Of touch, the childish sense of love,
Ever inquisitive to prove
Its strange possession, and to know
If the eye's report be really so.

XVI.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother,—such if you'll allow,
In *love*, not *law*, I'll call you now,—
I hope you're well. I write to say
Frederick has got, besides his pay,
A good appointment in the Docks ;
Also to thank you for the frocks
And shoes for Baby. I, (D.V.),
Shall wean him soon. Fred goes to sea
No more. I *am* so glad ; because,
Though kinder husband never was,
He seems still kinder to become
The more he stays with me at home.
When we are parted, I see plain
He's dull till he gets used again

To marriage. Do not tell him, though ;
 I would not have him know I know,
 For all the world.

How good of you

Not, as I've heard some mothers do,
 To hate his wife ! I try to mind
 All your advice ; but sometimes find
 I do not well know how. I thought
 To take it about dress ; so bought
 A gay new bonnet, gown, and shawl ;
 But Frederick was not pleased at all ;
 For, though he smiled, and said, "How
 smart !"

I feel, you know, what's in his heart.
 But I shall learn ! I fancied long
 That care in dress was very wrong,
 Till Frederick, in his startling way,
 When I began to blame, one day,
 The Admiral's Wife, because we hear
 She spends two hours, or something near,
 In dressing, took her part, and said
 How all things deck themselves that wed ;

How birds and plants grow fine to please
 Each other in their marriages ;
 And how (which certainly is true—
 It never struck me—did it you ?)
 Dress was, at first, Heaven's ordinance,
 And has much Scripture countenance.
 For Eliezer, we are told,
 Adorn'd with jewels and with gold
 Rebecca. In the Psalms, again,
 How the King's Daughter dress'd ! And, then,
 The Good Wife in the Proverbs, she
 Made herself clothes of tapestry,
 Purple and silk : and there's much more
 I had not thought about before !
 But Fred's so clever ! Do you know,
 Since Baby came, he loves me so !
 I'm really useful, now, to Fred ;
 And none could do so well instead.
 It's nice to fancy, if I died,
 He'd miss me from the Darling's side !
 Also, there's something now, you see,
 On which we talk, and quite agree ;

On which, without pride, too, I can
 Hope I'm as wise as any man.
 I should be happy now, if quite
 Sure that in *one* thing Fred was right.
 But, though I trust his prayers are said,
 Because he goes so late to bed,
 I doubt his Calling. Glad to find
 A text adapted to his mind,—
 That where St. Paul, in Man and Wife,
 Allows a little worldly life,—
 He smiled, and said that he knew all
 Such things as that without Saint Paul!
 And once he said, when I with pain
 Had got him just to read Romaine,
 "Men's creeds should not their hopes condemn.
 "Who wait for heaven to come to them
 "Are little like to go to heaven,
 "If logic's not the devil's leaven!"
 I cried at such a wicked joke,
 And he, surprised, went out to smoke.
 But to judge him is not for me,
 Who myself sin so dreadfully

As half to doubt if I should care
 To go to heaven, and he not there.
 He *must* be right ; and I dare say
 I shall soon understand his way.
 To other things, once strange, I've grown
 Accustom'd, nay, to like. I own
 'Twas long before I grew well used
 To sit, while Frederick read or mused
 For hours, and scarcely spoke. When he
 For all that, held the door to me,
 Pick'd up my handkerchief, and rose
 To set my chair ; with other shows
 Of honour, such as men, 'tis true,
 To sweethearts and fine ladies do,
 It almost seem'd an unkind jest ;
 But now I like these ways the best.
 They somehow make me glad and good ;
 And I don't mind his quiet mood.
 If Frederick *does* seem dull awhile,
 There's Baby. You should see him smile !
 I'm pretty and nice to him, sweet Pet,
 And he will learn no better yet ;

And when he's big and wise, you know,
There'll be new babes to think me so.
Indeed, now little Johnny makes
A busier time of it, and takes
Our thoughts off one another more,
I'm happy as need be, I'm sure !

XVII.

FELIX TO HONORIA.

LET me, Beloved, while gratitude
Is garrulous with coming good,
Or ere the tongue of happiness
Be silenced by your soft caress,
Relate how, musing here of you,
The clouds, the intermediate blue,
The air that rings with larks, the grave
And distant rumour of the wave,
The solitary sailing skiff,
The gusty corn-field on the cliff,
The corn-flower by the crumbling ledge,
Or, far down at the shingle's edge,
The sighing sea's recurrent crest
Breaking, resigned to its unrest,



All whisper, to my home-sick thought,
 Of charms in you till now uncaught,
 Or only caught as dreams, to die
 Ere they were own'd by memory.

High and ingenious Decree
 Of joy-devising Deity !
 You whose ambition only is
 The assurance that you make my bliss,
 Hence my first debt of love to show
 That you, past shewing, indeed do so,
 Trust me the world, the firmament,
 With diverse-natured worlds besprent,
 Were rear'd in no mere undivine
 Boast of Omnipotent design,
 The lion differing from the snake
 But for the trick of difference sake,
 And comets darting to and fro
 Because in circles planets go ;
 But rather that sole love might be
 Refresh'd throughout eternity
 In one sweet faith, for ever strange,
 Mirror'd by circumstantial change.

For, more and more, do I perceive
That everything is relative
To you, and that there's not a star,
Nor nothing in't, so strange or far,
But, if 'twere scann'd, 'twould chiefly mean
Somewhat, till then, in you unseen,
Something to make the bondage strait
Of you and me more intimate,
Some novel opportunity
Of nuptials in a new degree.

But, oh, with what a novel force
Your best-conn'd beauties, by remorse
Of absence, touch ! and, in my heart,
How bleeds afresh the youthful smart
Of passion fond, despairing still
To utter infinite goodwill
By worthy service ! Yet I know
That love is all that love can owe,
And this to offer is no less
Of worth, in kind speech or caress,
Than if my life-blood I should give.
For good is God's prerogative,



And Love's deed is but to prepare
 The flatter'd, dear Beloved to dare
 Acceptance of his gifts. When first
 On me your happy beauty burst,
 Honoria, verily it seem'd
 That naught beyond you could be dream'd
 Of beauty and of heaven's delight.
 Zeal of an unknown infinite
 Yet bade me ever wish you more
 Beatified than ere before.
 Angelical were your replies
 To my prophetic flatteries ;
 And sweet was the compulsion strong
 That drew me in the course along
 Of heaven's increasing bright allure,
 With provocations fresh of your
 Victorious capacity.

Whither may love, so fledged, not fly ?

Did not mere Earth hold fast the string
 Of this celestial soaring thing,
 So measure and make sensitive,
 And still, to the nerves, nice notice give

Of each minutest increment
Of such interminable ascent,
The heart would lose all count, and beat
Unconscious of a height so sweet,
And the spirit-pursuing senses strain
Their steps on the starry track in vain !
But, reading now the note just come,
With news of you, the babes, and home,
I think, and say, "To-morrow eve
With kisses me will she receive ;"
And, thinking, for extreme delight
Of love's extremes I laugh outright.

XVIII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

EIGHT wedding-days gone by, and none
Yet kept, to keep them all in one,
Jane and myself, with John and Grace
On donkeys, visited the place
I first drew breath in, Knatchley Wood.
Bearing the basket, stuff'd with food,
Milk, loaves, hard eggs, and marmalade,
I halted where the wandering glade
Divides the thicket. There I knew,
It seem'd, the very drops of dew
Below the unalter'd eglantine.
Nothing had changed since I was nine !
In the green desert, down to eat
We sat, our rustic grace at meat

Good appetite, through that long climb
Hungry two hours before the time.
And there Jane took her stitching out,
And John for bird's-nests pry'd about,
And Grace and Baby, in between
The warm blades of the breathing green,
Dodged grasshoppers ; and I no less,
In conscientious idleness,
Enjoy'd myself, under the noon
Stretch'd, and the sounds and sights of June
Receiving, with a drowsy charm,
Through muffled ear and folded arm.
And then, as if I sweetly dream'd,
I half remember'd how it seem'd
When I, too, was a little child
About the wild wood roving wild.
Pure breezes from the far-off height
Melted the blindness from my sight,
Until, with rapture, grief, and awe,
I saw again as then I saw.
As then I saw, I saw again
The harvest waggon in the lane,

With high-hung tokens of its pride
Left in the elms on either side ;
The daisies coming out at dawn
In constellations on the lawn ;
The glory of the daffodil ;
The three black windmills on the hill,
Whose magic arms, flung wildly by,
Sent magic shadows past the rye.
Within the leafy coppice, lo,
More wealth than miser's dreams could show.
The blackbird's warm and woolly brood,
Five golden beaks agape for food ;
The Gipsies, all the summer seen
Native as poppies to the Green ;
The winter, with its frosts and thaws
And opulence of hips and haws ;
The lovely marvel of the snow ;
The Tamar, with its altering show
Of gay ships sailing up and down,
Among the fields and by the Town.
And, dearer far than anything,
Came back the songs you used to sing.

(Ah, might you sing such songs again,
 And I, your child, but hear as then,
 With conscious profit of the gulf
 Flown over from my present self !)
 And, as to men's retreating eyes,
 Beyond high mountains higher rise,
 Still farther back there shone to me
 The dazzling dusk of infancy.
 Thither I look'd, as, sick of night,
 The Alpine shepherd looks to the height,
 And does not see the day, 'tis true,
 But sees the rosy tops that do.

Meantime Jane stitch'd, and fann'd the flies
 From my repose, with hush'd replies
 To Grace, and smiles when Baby fell.
 Her countenance love visible
 Appear'd, love audible her voice.
 Why in the past alone rejoice,
 Whilst here was wealth before me cast
 Which, I could feel, if 'twere but past
 Were then most precious ! Question vain,
 When ask'd again and yet again,

Year after year ; yet now, for no
 Cause, but that heaven's bright winds will blow
 Not at our beck, but as they list,
 It brought that distant, golden mist
 To grace the hour, firing the deep
 Of spirit and the drowsy keep
 Of joy, till, spreading uncontain'd,
 The holy power of seeing gain'd
 The outward eye, this owning even
 That where there's love and truth there's heaven.

Debtor to few, forgotten hours
 Like this, that truths for me are powers,
 (Ah, happy hours, 'tis something yet
 Not to forget that I forget !)
 I know their worth, and this, the chief,
 I count not vain because 'twas brief.

And now a cloud, bright, huge, and calm,
 Rose, doubtful if for bale or balm ;
 O'ertoppling crags, portentous towers
 Appear'd, at beck of viewless powers,
 Along a rifted mountain range.
 Untraceable and swift in change,

Those glittering peaks, disrupted, spread
 To solemn bulks, seen overhead ;
 The sunshine quench'd, from one dark form
 Fumed the appalling light of storm.
 Straight to the zenith, black with bale,
 The Gipsies' smoke rose deadly pale ;
 And one wide night of hopeless hue
 Hid from the heart the recent blue.
 And soon, with thunder crackling loud,
 A flash within the formless cloud
 Show'd vague recess, projection dim,
 Lone sailing rack, and shadowy rim.

We stood, safe group'd beneath a shed.
 Grace hid behind Jane's gown for dread,
 Who told her, fondling with her hair,
 "The naughty thunder, God took care
 "It should not hurt good little girls."
 At this Grace re-arranged her curls ;
 But John, disputing, seem'd to me
 Too much for Jane's theology,
 Who bade him watch the tempest. Now
 A blast made all the woodland bow ;

Against the whirl of leaves and dust
 Kine dropp'd their heads ; the tortured gust
 Jagg'd and convuls'd the ascending smoke
 To mockery of the lightning's stroke.
 The blood prick'd, and a blinding flash
 And close co-instantaneous crash
 Humbled the soul, and the rain all round
 Resilient dimm'd the whistling ground,
 Nor flagg'd in force from first to last,
 Till, sudden as it came, 'twas past,
 Leaving a trouble in the copse
 Of brawling birds and tinkling drops.

Change beyond hope ! Far thunder faint
 Mutter'd its vast and vain complaint,
 And gaps and fractures, fringed with light,
 Show'd the sweet skies, with squadrons bright
 Of cloudlets, glittering calm and fair
 Through gulfs of calm and glittering air.

With this adventure, we return'd.
 The roads the feet no longer burn'd.
 A wholesome smell of rainy earth
 Refresh'd our spirits, tired of mirth.

The donkey-boy drew friendly near
My Wife, and, touch'd by the kind cheer
Her countenance show'd, or sooth'd perchance
By the soft evening's sad advance,
As we were, stroked the flanks and head
Of the ass, and, somewhat thick-voiced, said,
"To 'ave to wop the donkeys so
" 'Ardens the 'art, but they wont go
" Without !" My Wife, by this impress'd,
As men judge poets by their best,
When now we reach'd the welcome door,
Gave him his hire, and sixpence more.

XIX.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mrs. Graham, the fever's past,
And Fred is well. I, in my last,
Forgot to say that, while 'twas on,
A lady, call'd Honoria Vaughan,
One of his Salisbury Cousins, came.
Had I, she ask'd me, heard her name ?
'Twas that Honoria, no doubt,
Whom he would sometimes talk about
And speak to, when his nights were bad,
And so I told her that I had.

She look'd so beautiful and kind !
And just the sort of wife my mind
Pictured for Fred, with many tears,
Those wretched early married years.

Visiting, yesterday, she said,
The Admiral's Wife, she learn'd that Fred
Was very ill ; she begg'd to be,
If possible, of use to me.
What could she do ? Last year, his Aunt
Died, leaving her, who had no want,
Her fortune. Half was his, she thought ;
But he, she knew, would not be brought
To take his rights at second hand.
Yet something might, she hoped, be plann'd.
What did I think of putting John
To school and college ? Mr. Vaughan,
When John was old enough, could give
Preferment to her relative ;
And she should be so pleased—I said
I felt quite sure that dearest Fred
Would be most thankful. Would we come,
And make ourselves, she ask'd, at home,
Next month, at High-Hurst ? Change of air
Both he and I should need, and there
At leisure we could talk, and then
Fix plans, as John was nearly ten.

It seemed so rude to think and doubt,
 So I said, Yes. In going out,
 She said, "How strange of Frederick, Dear,"
 (I wish he had been there to hear,)
 "To send no cards, or tell me what
 "A nice new Cousin I had got!"
 Was not that kind?

When Fred grew strong,
 I had, I found, done very wrong.
 Anger was in his voice and eye.
 With people born and bred so high
 As Fred and Mrs. Vaughan and you,
 It's hard to guess what's right to do;
 And he wont teach me!

Dear Fred wrote,
 Directly, such a lovely note,
 Which, though it undid all I had done,
 Was, both to me and Mrs. Vaughan,
 So kind! His words, I can't say why,
 Like soldiers' music, made me cry.

THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

PART II.

BOOK II.—THE VICTORIES OF LOVE.

"Omnia quæ in cœlis sunt in terris terrestri modo; omnia
quæ in terris sunt in cœlis celesti modo."

HERMES TRISMEGISTUS.

BOOK II.

THE VICTORIES OF LOVE.

I.

JANE TO HER MOTHER.

THANK Heaven, the burthens on the heart
Are not half known till they depart !
Although I pray'd, for many a year,
To love with love which casts out fear,
My Frederick's kindness frighten'd me,
And heaven seem'd less far off than he ;
And in my fancy I would trace
A lady with an angel's face,
And laugh that made devotion debt,
Till sick with envy and regret,

And wicked grief that God should e'er
Make women, and not make them fair.
That he might love me more because
Another in his memory was,
And that my indigence might be
To him what Baby's was to me,
And that a man should "feel all charms
In the mere folding of fond arms,"
(When Frederick says a thing, you know,
You are so sure it must be so,
It's almost dreadful), who could have thought?
But God's wise way is to give nought
To all our prayers, till we are tired,
And when, indeed, the change desired
Comes, lest we give ourselves the praise,
It comes by Providence, not Grace;
And mostly our thanks for granted prayers
Are groans at unexpected cares.
First Baby went to heaven, you know,
And, five weeks after, Grace went, too.
Then he became more talkative,
And, stooping to my heart, would give



Signs of his love, which pleased me more
 Than all the proofs he gave before ;
 And, in that time of our great grief,
 We talk'd religion for relief ;
 For, Mother, though we seldom name
 Religion, we now think the same !
 Oh, what a bar is thus removed
 To loving and to being loved !
 For no agreement really is
 In anything when none's in this.
 Why, once, if dear, dear Frederick press'd
 His Wife against his hearty breast,
 The interior difference seem'd to tear
 My own, until I could not bear
 The trouble. 'Twas a dreadful strife,
 And shew'd, indeed, that faith is life.
 He never felt this. If he did,
 I'm sure it could not have been hid ;
 For wives, I need not say to you,
 Can feel just what their husbands do,
 Without a word or look ; but then
 It is not so, you know, with men.

Thenceforward, many a Scripture text
 Help'd me, which had, till then, perplex'd.
 Oh, what a wondrous word seem'd this :
 He is my head, as Christ is his !
 None, surely, could have dared to see
 In marriage such a dignity
 For man, and for his wife, still less,
 Such happy, happy lowliness,
 Had God himself not made it plain !
 This revelation lays the rein—
 If I may speak so—on the neck
 Of a wife's love, takes thence the check
 Of conscience, and forbids to doubt
 Its measure is to be without
 All measure, and a right excess
 Is here her rule of godliness.

I took him not for love but fright ;
 He did but ask a dreadful right.
 In this was love, that he loved me
 The first, who was mere poverty.
 All that I know of love he taught ;
 And love is all I know of aught.

My merit is so small by his,
 That my demerit is my bliss ;
 Yet, for the sake of only love,
 And that his gift, does he approve
 His wife entirely, as the Lord
 The Church his Bride, whom thus the Word
 Calls Black but Comely, Precious, Sweet,
 Fair, Pleasant, Holy, yea, Complete,
 When, really, she was no such thing !
 But God knew well what He could bring
 From nought, and He, her beauty's cause,
 Saw it, and praised it, ere it was.

So did, so does my lord, my friend,
 On whom for all things I depend ;
 Whose I am wholly, rather who
 I am, so am in all things new ;
 My Love, my Life, my Reverence, yes,
 And, in some sort, my Righteousness !
 For wisdom does in him so shine
 My conscience seems more his than mine.
 My life is hid with him in Christ,
 Never thencefrom to be enticed ;

And in his strength have I such rest
As when the baby on my breast
Finds what it knows not how to seek,
And, very happy, very weak,
Lies, only knowing all is well,
Pillow'd on kindness palpable.
Oh, this unspeakable delight
Of owing a debt that's infinite!
And yet, if possible, more sweet
The folly, vanity, conceit,
Astonishment and mystery,
That he delights no less in me !

II.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

DEAR Saint, I'm still at High-Hurst Park.
The house is fill'd with folks of mark.

Honoria suits a good estate
Much better than I hoped. How fate
Pets her with happiness and pride !
And such a loving lord, beside !
But, between us, Sweet, everything
Has limits, and to build a wing
To this old house, when Courtholm stands
Empty upon his Berkshire lands,
And all that Honor might be near
Papa, was buying love too dear.

And yet, to see mild Mrs. Vaughan
Shining on all she looks upon,

You'd fancy none could stand more high
 Than others in her charity ;
 And to behold her courtly lord
 Converse with her across the board,
 'Twould seem that part of perfect life
 Was not to covet one's own wife.
 The hypocrites !

Love, there are two

Guests here, whose names will startle
 you :

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Graham !
 I thought he stay'd away for shame.
 He and his wife were ask'd, you know,
 And would not come, four years ago.
 You recollect Miss Smythe found out
 Who she had been, and all about
 Her people at the Powder-mill ;
 And how the fine Aunt tried to instil
Haut ton, and how, at last poor Jane
 Had got so shy and *gauche* that, when
 The Dockyard gentry came to sup,
 She always had to be lock'd up ;

And some one wrote to us and said
 Her mother was a kitchen-maid.
 Dear Mary, you'll be charm'd to know
 It *must* be all a fib. But, oh,
 She *is* the oddest little Pet
 On which my eyes were ever set !
 She's so *outrée* and natural
 That, when she first arrived, we all
 Wonder'd, as when a robin comes
 In through the window to eat crumbs
 At breakfast with us. She has sense,
 Humility, and confidence ;
 And, save in dressing just a thought
 Gayer in colours than she ought,
 (To-day she looks a cross between
 Gipsy and Fairy, red and green,)
 She always happens to do well.
 And yet one never quite can tell
 What she *might* do or utter next.
 Lord Clitheroe is much perplex'd ;
 Her husband, every now and then,
 Looks nervous ; all the other men

Are charm'd. Yet she has neither grace,
Nor one good feature in her face.
Her eyes, indeed, flame in her head,
Like very altar-fires to Fred,
Whose step she follows everywhere,
Like a tame duck, to the despair
Of Colonel Holmes, who does his part
To break her funny little heart.
Honor's enchanted. 'Tis her view
That people, if they're good and true,
And treated well, and let alone,
Will kindly take to what's their own,
And always be original,
Like children. Honor's just like all
The rest of us ! But, thinking so,
It's well she miss'd Lord Clitheroe,
Who hates originality,
Though he puts up with it in me.

Poor Mrs. Graham has never been
To the Opera ! You should have seen
The innocent way she told the Earl
She thought Plays sinful when a girl,



And now she never had a chance !
 Frederick's complacent smile and glance
 Towards her, shew'd me, past a doubt,
 Honoria had been quite cut out.
 'Tis very strange ; for Mrs. Graham,
 Though Frederick's fancy none can blame,
 Seems the last woman you'd have thought
Her lover would have ever sought.
 She never reads, I find, nor goes
 Anywhere ; so that I suppose
 She got at all she ever knew
 By growing up, as kittens do.

Talking of kittens, by-the-bye,
 You have more influence than I
 With dear Honoria. Get her, Dear,
 To be a little more severe
 With those sweet Children. They've the run
 Of all the place. When school was done,
 Maud burst in, while the Earl was there,
 With " Oh, Mama, do be a bear !"

They come on with the fruit, and climb
 In people's laps, and all the time

Eat, and we ladies have to rise
Lest Frank should die of strawberries.

Do you know, Dear, this odd wife of Fred
Adores his old Love in his stead !
She *is* so nice, yet, I should say,
Not quite the thing for every day.
Wonders are wearying ! Felix goes
Next Sunday with her to the Close,
And you will judge her.

Honor asks

All Wiltshire Belles here ; Felix basks
Like Puss in fire-shine, when the room
Is thus aflame with female bloom ;
And, as she smiles when most would pout,
His little lawless loves go out
With the last brocade. 'Tis not the
same,

I fear, with Mrs. Frederick Graham.
Honor should not have her here,—
And this you might just hint, my Dear,—
For Felix says he never saw
Such proof of what he holds for law,

That "beauty is love which can be seen."
Whatever he by this may mean,
Were it not dreadful if he fell
In love with her on principle!

III.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

MOTHER, you know that I, at first,
Half fear'd this visit to the Hurst.
Fred must, I felt, be so distress'd
By aught in me unlike the rest
Who come here. But I find the place
Delightful ; there's such ease, and grace,
And kindness, and all seem to be
On such a high equality.
They have not got to think, you know,
How far to make the money go.
But Frederick says it's less the expense
Of money, than of sound good-sense,
Quickness to care what others feel,
And thoughts with nothing to conceal

Which I'll teach Johnny. Mrs. Vaughan
 Was waiting for us on the Lawn,
 And kiss'd and call'd me "Cousin." Fred
 Neglected his old friends, she said.
 He laugh'd, and reddened up at this.
 She was, you know, a flame of his ;
 But I'm not jealous ! Luncheon done
 I left him, who had just begun
 To talk about the Russian War
 With an old Lady, Lady Carr,—
 A Countess, but I'm more afraid,
 A great deal, of the Lady's Maid,—
 And went with Mrs. Vaughan to see
 The pictures, which appeared to be
 Of sorts of horses, clowns and cows
 Call'd Wouvermans and Cuyps and Dows.
 And then she took me up, to shew
 Her bedroom, where, long years ago,
 A Queen slept. 'Tis all tapestries
 Of Cupids, Gods, and Goddesses,
 And black, carved oak. A curtain'd door
 Leads thence into her soft Boudoir,

Where even her husband may but come
By favour. He, too, has his room,
Kept sacred to his solitude.
Did I not think the plan was good ?
She ask'd me ; but I said how small
Our house was, and that, after all,
Though Frederick would not say his prayers
At night till I was safe upstairs,
I thought it wrong to be so shy
Of being good when I was by.
" Oh, you should humour him !" she said,
With her sweet voice and smile ; and led
The way to where the children ate
Their dinner, and Miss Williams sate.
She's only Nursery-Governess,
Yet they consider her no less
Than Lord or Lady Carr, or me.
Just think how happy she must be !
The Ball-Room, with its painted sky
Where heavy angels seem to fly,
Is a dull place ; its size and gloom
Make them prefer, for drawing-room,



The Library, all done up new
 And comfortable, with a view
 Of Salisbury Spire between the boughs.

When she had shewn me through the house,
 (I wish I could have let her know
 That she herself was half the shew ;
 She is so handsome and so kind !)
 She fetch'd the children, who had dined,
 And, taking one in either hand,
 Shew'd me how all the grounds were plann'd.
 The lovely garden gently slopes
 To where a curious bridge of ropes
 Crosses the Avon to the Park.
 We rested by the stream, to mark
 The brown backs of the hovering trout.
 Frank tickled one, and took it out
 From under a stone. We saw his owls,
 And awkward Cochín-China fowls,
 And shaggy pony in the croft ;
 And then he dragg'd us to a loft,
 Where pigeons, as he push'd the door,
 Fann'd clear a breadth of dusty floor,

And set us coughing. I confess
 I trembled for my nice silk dress.
 I cannot think how Mrs. Vaughan
 Ventured with that which she had on,—
 A mere, white wrapper, with a few
 Plain trimmings of a quiet blue,
 But, oh, so pretty ! Then the bell
 For dinner rang. I look'd quite well,
 ("Quite charming," were the words Fred said,)
 With the new gown that I've had made
 At Salisbury. In the drawing-room
 Was Mr. Vaughan, just then come home.
 I thought him rather cold, but find
 He is at heart extremely kind.
 He's Captain of the Yeomanry,
 And Magistrate, and has to see
 About the paupers and the roads ;
 And Fred says he has written odes
 On Mrs. Vaughan, to send her praise
 And beauty down to distant days.
 So she deserves ! What cause there is
 I know not, though, for saying this,

But that she looks so kind and young,
And every word's a little song.
I *am* so proud of Frederick.
He's so high-bred and lordly-like
With Mrs. Vaughan ! He's not quite so
At home with me ; but that, you know,
I can't expect, or wish. 'Twould hurt,
And seem to mock at my desert.
Not but that I'm a duteous wife
And kind ; but, in another life,
Where all are fair that have been true,
I hope I shall be graceful too,
Like Mrs. Vaughan. And, now, good-bye.
That happy thought has made me cry,
And feel half-sorry that my cough,
In this fine air, seems leaving off.

IV.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

HOW beyond hope was heard the prayer
I offer'd in my youth's despair !
Could any, whilst there's any woe,
Be wholly blest, then she were so.
She is, and is aware of it,
Her Husband's endless benefit ;
But, though their daily ways reveal
The depth of private joy they feel,
'Tis not their bearing each to each
That does abroad their secret preach,
But such a lovely good-intent
To all within their government
And friendship as, 'tis well discern'd,
Each of the other must have learn'd ;

For no mere dues of neighbourhood
 Ever begot so fair a mood.

Love-mild Honoria, trebly mild
 With added loves of lord and child,
 Is else unalter'd. Years, which wrong
 The rest, touch not her beauty, young
 With youth which rather seems her clime,
 Than aught that's relative to time.
 All in her presence generous grow,
 As in the sunshine flowers blow ;
 Her many gentle virtues miss
 Proud virtue's blazon, and are bliss,
 As colours, each superb to sight,
 Being all combined, are only light ;
 The standards of the foe are furl'd ;
 The powers and pleasures of the world
 Pay tribute ; and her days are all
 So high, pure, sweet, and practical,
 She almost seems to have, at home,
 What's promised of the life to come.

And fair, indeed, should be the few
 God dowers with nothing else to do ;

And liberal of their light, and free
 To show themselves, that all may see !
 For alms let poor men poorly give
 The meat whereby men's bodies live ;
 But they of wealth are stewards wise
 Whose graces are their charities.

The sunny charm about this home
 Makes all to shine who thither come.
 My own dear Jane has caught its grace,
 And, honour'd, honours too the place.
 Across the lawn I lately walk'd
 Alone, and watch'd where moved and talk'd,
 Gentle and goddess-like of air,
 Honoriâ and some Stranger fair.
 I chose a path unlit by these ;
 When one of the two Goddesses,
 With my Wife's voice, but softer, said,
 " Will you not walk with us, dear Fred ?"

She moves, indeed, the modest peer
 Of all the proudest ladies here.
 We daily dine with men who stand
 Among the leaders of the land,

And women beautiful and wise,
 With England's greatness in their eyes.
 To high, traditional good-sense,
 And knowledge ripe without pretence,
 And human truth exactly hit
 By quiet and conclusive wit,
 Listens my little, homely Dove,
 Mistakes the points and laughs for love ;
 And, after, stands and combs her hair,
 And calls me much the wittiest there !

With reckless loyalty, dear Wife,
 She lays herself about my life !
 The joy I might have had of yore
 I have not ; for 'tis now no more,
 With me, the lyric time of youth,
 And sweet sensation of the truth.
 Yet, past my hope or purpose bless'd,
 In my chance choice let be confess'd
 The tenderer Providence that rules
 The fates of children and of fools !

I kiss'd the kind, warm neck that slept,
 And from her side this morning stepp'd,

To bathe my brain from drowsy night
 In the sharp air and golden light.
 The dew, like frost, was on the pane.
 The year begins, though fair, to wane.
 There is a fragrance in its breath
 Which is not of the flowers, but death,
 And green above the ground appear
 The lilies of another year.
 I wander'd forth, and took my path
 Among the bloomless aftermath ;
 And heard the steadfast robin sing
 As if his own warm heart were Spring,
 And watch'd him feed where, on the yew,
 Hung sugar'd drops of crimson dew ;
 And then return'd, by walls of peach,
 And pear-trees bending to my reach,
 And rose-beds with the roses gone,
 To bright-laid breakfast. Mrs. Vaughan
 Was there, none with her. I confess
 I love her rather more than less !
 But she alone was loved of old ;
 Now love is twain, nay, manifold ;

For, somehow, he whose daily life
Adjusts itself to one true wife,
Grows to a nuptial, near degree
With all that's fair and womanly.
Therefore, as more than friends, we met,
Without constraint, without regret ;
The wedded yoke that each had donn'd
Seeming a sanction, not a bond.

V.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

YOUR love lacks joy, your letter says.

Yes ; love requires the focal space
Of recollection or of hope,
E'er it can measure its own scope.
Too soon, too soon comes Death to show
We love more deeply than we know !
The rain, that fell upon the height
Too gently to be call'd delight,
Within the dark vale reappears
As a wild cataract of tears ;
And love in life should strive to see
Sometimes what love in death would be !
Easier to love, we so should find,
It is than to be just and kind.

She's gone : shut close the coffin-lid :
 What distance for another did
 That death has done for her ! The good,
 Once gazed upon with heedless mood,
 Now fills with tears the famish'd eye,
 And turns all else to vanity.
 'Tis sad to see, with death between,
 The good we have pass'd and have not seen !
 How strong appear the words of all !
 The looks of those that live appal.
 They are the ghosts, and check the breath :
 There's no reality but death,
 And hunger for some signal given
 That we shall have our own in heaven.
 But this the God of love lets be
 A horrible uncertainty.

How great her smallest virtue seems,
 How small her greatest fault ! Ill dreams
 Were those that foil'd with loftier grace
 The homely kindness of her face.
 'Twas here she sat and work'd, and there
 She comb'd and kiss'd the children's hair ;

Or, with one baby at her breast,
 Another taught, or hush'd to rest.
 Praise does the heart no more refuse
 To the divinity of use.
 Her humblest good is hence most high
 In the heavens of fond memory ;
 And Love says Amen to the word,
 A prudent wife is from the Lord.
 Her worst gown's kept, ('tis now the best,
 As that in which she oftenest dress'd,)
 For memory's sake more precious grown
 Than she herself was for her own.
 Poor Wife ! foolish it seem'd to fly
 To sobs instead of dignity,
 When she was hurt. Now, more than all,
 Heart-rending and angelical
 That ignorance of what to do,
 Bewilder'd still by wrong from you :
 For what man ever yet had grace
 Ne'er to abuse his power and place ?
 No magic of her voice or smile
 Suddenly raised a fairy isle,

But fondness for her underwent
An unregarded increment,
Like that which lifts, through centuries,
The coral-reef within the seas,
Till, lo, the land where was the wave.
Alas ! 'tis everywhere her grave,

VL

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother, I can surely tell,
Now, that I never shall get well.
Besides the warning in my mind,
All suddenly are grown so kind.
Fred stopp'd the Doctor, yesterday,
Downstairs, and, when he went away,
Came smiling back, and sat with me,
Pale, and conversing cheerfully
About the Spring, and how my cough,
In finer weather, would leave off.
I saw it all, and told him plain
I felt no hope of Spring again.
Then he, after a word of jest,
Burst into tears upon my breast,

And own'd, when he could speak, he knew
There was a little danger, too.
This made me very weak and ill,
And while, last night, I lay quite still,
And, as he fancied, in the deep
Exhausted rest of my short sleep,
I heard, or dream'd I heard him pray :
" Oh, Father, take her not away !
" Let not life's dear assurance lapse
" Into death's agonized ' Perhaps,'
" A hope without Thy sanction, where
" Less than assurance is despair !
" Give me some sign, if go she must,
" That death's not worse than dust to dust,
" Not heaven on whose oblivious shore
" Joy I may have, but her no more !
" The bitterest cross, it seems to me,
" Of all is infidelity ;
" And so, if I may choose, I'll miss
" The kind of heaven which comes to this !
" If doom'd, indeed, this fever ceased,
" To die out wholly, like a beast,

" Forgetting all life's ill success
 " In dark and peaceful nothingness,
 " I could but say, Thy will be done ;
 " For, dying thus, I were but one
 " Of seed innumerable which ne'er
 " In all the worlds shall bloom or bear.
 " I've put life past to so poor use
 " Well may'st Thou life to come refuse,
 " And justice, which the spirit contents,
 " Shall still in me all vain laments ;
 " Nay, pleased, I will, while yet I live,
 " Think Thou my forfeit joy may'st give
 " To some fresh life, else unelect,
 " And heaven not feel my poor defect !
 " Only let not Thy method be
 " To make that life, and call it me ;
 " Still less to sever mine in twain,
 " And tell each half to live again,
 " And count itself the whole ! To die,
 " Is it love's disintegrality ?
 " Answer me, ' No,' and I, with grace,
 " Will life's brief desolation face,

“ My ways, as native to the clime,
“ Adjusting to the wintry time,
“ Ev’n with a patient cheer thereof—”

He started up, hearing me cough.
Oh, Mother, now my last doubt’s gone !
He likes me *more* than Mrs. Vaughan ;
And death, which takes me from his side,
Shews me, in very deed, his bride !

VII.

JANE TO FREDERICK.

I LEAVE this, Dear, for you to read,
For strength and hope, when I am dead.
When Grace died, I was so perplex'd,
I could not find one helpful text ;
And when, a little while before,
I saw her sobbing on the floor,
Because I told her that in heaven
She would be as the angels even,
And would not want her doll, 'tis true
A horrible fear within me grew,
That, since the preciousness of love
Went thus for nothing, mine might prove
To be no more, and heaven's bliss
Some dreadful good which is not this.

But being about to die makes clear
 Many dark things. I have no fear,
 Now, that my love, my grief, my joy
 Is but a passion for a toy.
 I cannot speak at all, I find,
 The shining something in my mind
 That shews so much that, if I took
 My thoughts all down, 'twould make a book.
 God's Word, which lately seem'd above
 The simpleness of human love,
 To my death-sharpen'd hearing tells
 Of little or of nothing else ;
 And many thoughts I hoped were true,
 When first they came, like songs, from you,
 Now rise with witness past the reach
 Of doubt, and I to you can teach,
 As if with felt authority
 And as things seen, what you taught me.
 Yet how ? I have no words but those
 Which every one already knows :
 As, " No man hath at any time
 "Seen God, but 'tis the love of Him

"Made perfect, and He dwells in us,
 "If we each other love." Or thus,
 "My goodness misseth in extent
 "Of Thee, Lord ! In the excellent
 "I know Thee ; and the Saints on Earth
 "Make all my love and holy mirth."
 And further, "Inasmuch as ye
 "Did it to one of these, to Me
 "Ye did it, though ye nothing thought
 "Nor knew of Me, in that ye wrought."

Frederick, the love of you and me
 Is love to God and charity
 To all men. Oh, I love you so,
 I love all other, friend and foe,
 And wish, perforce, all kinds of good
 To all in need and neighbourhood !
 What shall I dread ? Will God undo
 This bond, which is all others too ?
 And when I meet you will you say
 To my reclaiming looks, "Away !
 "A dearer love my bosom warms
 "With higher rights and holier charms.

"The children, whom thou here may'st see,
 "Neighbours that mingle thee and me,
 "And gaily on impartial lyres
 "Renounce the foolish filial fires
 "They felt, with 'Praise to God on high,
 "'Goodwill to all else equally ;'
 "The trials, duties, service, tears ;
 "The many fond, confiding years
 "Of nearness sweet with thee apart ;
 "The joy of body, mind, and heart ;
 "The love that grew a reckless growth,
 "Unmindful that the marriage-oath
 "To love in an eternal style
 "Meant—only for a little while :
 "Sever'd are now those bonds earth-wrought ;
 "All love, not new, stands here for nought !"

Why, it seems almost wicked, Dear,
 Even to fancy such a fear !
 Are we not "heirs," as man and wife,
 "Together of eternal life ?"
 Was Paradise e'er meant to fade,
 To make which marriage first was made ?

Neither beneath him nor above
 Could man in Eden find his Love ;
 Yet with him in the garden walk'd
 His God, and with him mildly talk'd !
 Shall the humble preference offend
 In heaven, which God did there commend ?
 Are "honourable and undefiled"
 The names of aught from heaven exiled ?
 And are we not forbid to grieve
 As without hope ? Does God deceive,
 And call that hope which is despair,
 Namely, the heaven we should not share !
 Image and glory of the man,
 As he of God, is woman. Can
 This holy, sweet proportion die
 Into a dull equality ?
 Are we not one flesh, yea, so far
 More than the babe and mother are,
 That sons are bid mothers to leave
 And to their wives alone to cleave,
 "For *they* two are one flesh ?" But 'tis
 In the flesh we rise. Our union is,

You know 'tis said, "great mystery."
 Great mockery, it appears to me ;
 Poor image of the spousal bond
 Of Christ and Church, if loosed beyond
 This life !—'Gainst which, and much more yet,
 There's not a single word to set.
 The speech to the scoffing Sadducee
 Is not in point to you and me ;
 For how could Christ have taught such clods
 That Cæsar's things are also God's ?
 The sort of Wife the Law could make
 Might well be "hated" for Love's sake,
 And left, like money, land, or house ;
 For out of Christ is no true spouse.

I used to think it strange of Him
 To make love's after-life so dim,
 Or only clear by inference :
 But God trusts much to common sense,
 And only tells us what, without
 His Word, we could not have found out.
 On fleshly tables of the heart
 He penn'd truth's feeling counterpart

In hopes that come to all : so, Dear,
Trust these, and be of happy cheer,
Nor think that he who has loved well
Is of all men most miserable.

There's much more yet I want to say,
But cannot now. You know my way
Of feeling strong from twelve till two
After my wine. I'll write to you
Daily some words, which you shall have
To break the silence of the grave.

VIII.

JANE TO FREDERICK.

YOU'LL think perhaps, "Ah, could she know,
How much I loved her !" Dear, I do !
And you will say, "Of this new awe
"Of heart which makes her fancies law,
"These watchful duties of despair,
"She does not dream, she cannot care !"
Frederick, you see how false that is,
Or how could I have written this ?
And, should it ever cross your mind
That, now and then, you were unkind,
You never, never were at all !
Remember that ! It's natural
For such as Mr. Vaughan to come,
From a morning's useful pastime, home,

And greet, with such a courteous zest,
 His handsome wife, still newly dress'd,
 As if the Bird of Paradise
 Should daily change her plumage thrice.
 He's always well, she's always gay.
 Of course ! But he who toils all day,
 And comes home hungry, tired, or cold,
 And feels 'twould do him good to scold
 His wife a little, let him trust
 Her love, and boldly be unjust,
 Till sooth'd in mind by meat and rest ?
 If, after that, she's well caress'd,
 And told how good she is, to bear
 His humour, fortune makes it fair.
 Women like men to be like men ;
 That is, at least, just now and then.
 Thus, I have nothing to forgive,
 But those first years, (how could I live !)
 When, though I really did behave
 So stupidly, you never gave
 One unkind word or look at all :
 As if I was some animal

You pitied ! Now, in later life,
You used me like a real Wife.

You feel, Dear, in your present mood,
Your Wife, since she was kind and good,
A child of God, a living soul,
Was not so different, on the whole,
From Her who had a little more
Of God's best gifts : but, oh, be sure,
My dear, dear Love, to take no blame
Because you could not feel the same
Towards me, living, as when dead.
A starving man must needs think bread
So sweet ! and, only at their rise
And setting, blessings, to the eyes,
Like the sun's course, grow visible.
If you are sad, remember well,
Against delusions of despair,
That memory sees things as they were,
And not as they were misenjoy'd,
And would be still, if ought destroy'd
The glory of their hopelessness :
So that, in truth, you had me less

In days when necessary zeal
 For my perfection made you feel
 My faults the most, than now your love
 Forgets but where it can approve.
 You gain by loss, if that seem'd small
 Possess'd, which, being gone, turns all
 Surviving good to vanity.

Oh, Fred, this makes it sweet to die !

Say to yourself : " 'Tis comfort yet
 " I made her that which I regret ;
 " And parting might have come to pass
 " In a worse season ; as it was,
 " Love an eternal temper took,
 " Dipp'd, glowing, in Death's icy brook !"
 Or say, " On her poor, feeble head
 " This might have fallen : 'tis mine
 instead !

" And so great evil sets me free
 " Henceforward from calamity.
 " And, in her little children, too,
 " How much for her I yet can do !"
 And grieve not for these orphans even ;

For central to the love of Heaven
 Is each child as each star to space.
 This truth my dying love has grace
 To trust with a so sure content,
 I fear I seem indifferent.

You must not think a child's small heart
 Cold, because it and grief soon part.
 Fanny will keep them all away,
 And you'll not hear them laugh and play,
 Until the funeral's over. Then
 I hope you'll be yourself again,
 And glad, with all your soul to find
 How God thus to the sharpest wind
 Suits the shorn lambs. Instruct them,

Dear,
 For my sake, in His love and fear.
 Show how, until their journey's done,
 Not to be weary they must run ;
 And warn them 'gainst the blasphemy
 That Heaven makes sin necessity.
 No fig-leaves hide that shame from God
 Which kills love's root within the sod !

Strive not to dissipate your grief
By any lightness. True relief
Of sorrow is by sorrow brought.
And yet for sorrow's sake, you ought
To grieve with measure. Do not spend
So good a power to no good end!
Would you, indeed, have memory stay
In the heart, lock up and put away
Relics and likenesses and all
Musings, which waste what they recal.
True comfort, and the only thing
To soothe without diminishing
A prized regret, is to match here,
By a strict life, God's love severe.
Yet, after all, by nature's course,
Feeling must lose its edge and force.
Again you'll reach the desert tracts
Where only sin or duty acts.
But, if love always lit our path,
Where were the trial of our faith?
Oh, should the mournful honeymoon
Of death be over strangely soon,

And life-long resolutions, made
 In grievous haste, as quickly fade,
 Seeming the truth of grief to mock,
 Think, Dearest, 'tis not by the clock
 That sorrow goes ! A month of tears
 Is more than many, many years
 Of common time. Shun, if you can,
 However, any passionate plan,
 Grieve with the heart ; let not the head
 Grieve on, when grief of heart is dead ;
 For all the powers of life defy
 A superstitious constancy.

The only bond I hold you to
 Is that which nothing can undo.
 A man is not a young man twice ;
 And if, of his young years, he lies
 A faithful score in one wife's breast,
 She need not mind who has the rest.
 In this do what you will, dear Love,
 And feel quite sure that I approve.
 And, should it chance as it may be,
 Give her my wedding-ring from me ;

And never dream that you can err
T'wards me by being good to her ;
Nor let remorseful thoughts destroy
In you the kindly flowering joy
And pleasure of the natural life.

But don't forget your fond, dead Wife.
And, Frederick, should you ever be
Tempted to think your love of me
All fancy, since it drew its breath
So much more sweetly after death,
Remember that I never did
A single thing you once forbid ;
All poor folks loved me ; and, at the end,
Even Mrs. Vaughan wrote "Dearest Friend !"

IX.

JANE TO FREDERICK.

FROM John his secret I have drawn :
He's deeply in love with sweet Miss
Vaughan.

I'm sure, too, that her parents know,
And are content to have it so.
By Uncle's Will, our Boy will be
Rich, as they know ; and Emily,
Sweet Baby, will of course approve
The first fine Youth they let make love.

I never could get courage, Dear,
To tell you this ; it was too near
My heart. You loved her Mother so !
(And I love all things loved by you !)

Now, in your children, you will wed !
 And John seems so much comforted,
 (Like Isaac when *his* mother died,
 And fair Rebekah was his bride,)
 By his new hope, for losing me !
 And all this happiness, you see,
 Somehow or other, should I try
 To talk to you, would make me cry.
 I hope you'll tell dear Mrs. Vaughan
 How much you loved me, when I'm gone !

And this reminds me how, last night,
 I fell asleep in strange delight,
 And dream'd I was in heaven—mere dreams,
 Yet, to my sickly thought, it seems
 To have been true vision ! Things not true,
 As once you taught me, often do
 To make true things conceivable ;
 So what I saw I'll try to tell.

Imaged in heaven's crystal floor,
 I saw myself, myself no more.
 In such a shape henceforth I dwelt
 That love me most of all I felt

You must ! Though others, to my view,
 Were lovelier, yet the love of you
 I found was all the loveliness
 Which there 'twas given you to possess
 Or wish for. So, besides the glow
 Of God, the same on every brow,
 Like me, the angelic women were
 Each with a separate beauty fair,
 Which was a lovely mystery
 To all, but him who had the key.
 Our marriage-robcs, that round us shook,
 Were love on which the eyes could look,
 On which, too, from seven bows in heaven,
 Whereof the hues were seven times seven,
 And always shifting, fell such light
 As made the expressions infinite
 In those bright veils ; for brief above,
 As here, was every joy of love.

A Lady came and gazed on me,
 And laugh'd, and sang, " Glad will he be !"
 And one, " Love, here at last achieved,
 " Not only is, but is perceived !"

And one, who beckon'd me apart,
 Press'd me against her angel's heart,
 And said, 'Tis mine to guard his Wife
 " From strangeness till he comes to life."

Most like to earth's was heaven's good ;
 Most different was the gratitude !
 I saw the rose and felt the breeze,
 And laugh'd and sang for bliss of these ;
 And every thing on every part
 Was, oh, such pleasure in the heart !
 The nearness of the Lord I knew
 By mild recurrent glows that grew
 Within the breast, and died away,
 And made the change of night and day.
 But this was wonderful, that, when
 The Day was fullest, all the men
 Seem'd women, and the women were
 Beautiful infants, whom with care
 They kept from noon's o'erwhelming night,
 Singing them stories of the Light,
 The burthen of the lullaby
 Being, " All praise to God on high,

“ Who makes the Babes so soft and sweet.”

Sequester'd from the heavenly heat
 And splendours of the fields of love,
 The Lady shew'd me then a grove.
 Breathlessly still was part, and part
 Was breathing with an easy heart ;
 And there below, in lamb-like game,
 Were virgins, all so much the same,
 That each was all. A youth drew nigh,
 And on them gazed with dreaming eye,
 And would have pass'd, but that a maid,
 Clapping her hands above her, said,
 “ My time is now !” and laughing ran
 After the dull and strange young man,
 And bade him stop and look at her.
 And so he call'd her lovelier
 Than any else, only because
 She only then before him was.
 And, while they stood and gazed, a change
 Was seen in both, diversely strange :
 The youth was ever more and more
 That good which he had been before ;

But the glad maiden grew and grew
Such that the rest no longer knew
Their sister, who was now to sight
The young man's self, yet opposite,
As the outer rainbow is the first,
But weaker, and the hues reversed.
And whereas, in the abandon'd grove,
The virgin round the Central Love
Had blindly circled in her play,
Now danced she round her partner's way ;
And, as the earth the moon's, so he
Had the responsibility
Of her diviner motion. "Lo,"
He sang, and the heavens began to glow,
"The pride of personality,
"Seeking its highest, aspires to die,
"And in unspeakably profound
"Humiliation Love is crown'd !
"And from his exaltation still
"Into his ocean of good-will
"He curiously casts the lead
"To find strange depths of lowlihead."



To one same tune, but higher, "Bold,"
 The maiden sang, "is Love! For cold
 "On Earth are blushes, and for shame
 "Of such an ineffectual flame
 "As ill consumes the sacrifice!"

By the Angel led, in such sweet wise,
 There did my happy hearing greet
 That which she bade me not repeat.
 "Truth levell'd to the world's low eye,
 "In heaven," said she, "appears a lie;
 "And tales of the seraphic sphere
 "Were scandals in the earth's false ear,"
 And, following thus the Lady, she
 Turn'd oft to gaze and smile on me,
 Saying how like I was to one
 She knew on earth, more heavenly none.
 "And, when you laugh, I see," she sigh'd,
 "How much he loved her! Many a bride
 "In heaven such countersemblance bears,
 "Through what Love deem'd rejected prayers."
 And, lo, within the crystal drawn,
 I laugh'd the laugh of Mrs. Vaughan!

Suffering a momentary lapse
Earthwards, I thus inquired : " Perhaps
" The open glory of the Lord
" Will show, as promised in His Word ?"
And she replied, " What may you mean ?
" Nought else in heaven was ever seen !"

She would have shewn me more, but then
One of a troop of glorious men,
From some great work, towards her came,
And she so smiled 'twas such a flame,
Aaron's twelve jewels seem'd to mix
With the lights of the Seven Candlesticks.

X.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

MY dearest Aunt, the Wedding-day,
But for Jane's loss, and you away,
Was all a Bride from heaven could beg !
Skies bluer than the sparrow's egg,
And clearer than the cuckoo's call ;
And such a sun, the flowers all
With double ardour seem'd to blow !
The very daisies were a show,
Expanded with uncommon pride,
Like little pictures of the Bride.
Your Great-Niece and your Grandson were
Perfection of a pretty pair.
How well Honoria's girls turn out,
Although they never go about !

Dear me, what trouble and expense
It took to teach mine confidence !
Hers greet mankind as I've heard say
That wild things do, where beasts of prey
Were never known, nor any men
Have met their fearless eyes till then.
Their grave, inquiring trust to find
All creatures of their simple kind
Quite disconcerts bold coxcombry,
And makes less perfect candour shy.

Bred to their parents' courtly style,
The lure of an admiring smile
Is lost ; and flatteries less sincere
And authorised than theirs, they hear
Unmoved, like solemn little queens,
Nor even wonder what it means.
Our Bride has never been from home !
So, when John carries her to Rome,
Thenceforward she will have a dim
Idea that Rome is part of him.
Of course he knows that ! Folks may scoff,
But how your home-kept girls go off !

Yes, Hymen hastens to unband
 The waist that ne'er felt waltzer's hand !
 At last I see my Sister's right,
 And I've told Maud this very night,
 (But, oh, my daughters have such wills !)
 To knit, and only dance quadrilles.

You say Fred never writes to you
 Frankly, as once he used to do,
 About himself ; and you complain
 He shared with none his grief for Jane.
 Ah, dear Aunt, that's the way with
 men.

I've often noticed it ! But then
 It all comes of the foolish fright
 They're in at the word, hypocrite.
 Sooner than inconsistent seem
 I've heard a young male saint blaspheme !
 And though, when first in love, some-
 times

They rave in letters, talk, and rhymes,
 When once they find, as find they must,
 How hard 'tis to be hourly just

To those they love, they are dumb for shame,
Where we, you see, rave on the same.

Honoria, to whose heart alone
He seems to open all his own,
At times has tears in her kind eyes,
After their private colloquies.
I should have fancied, but for this,
That time had heal'd that grief of his.
Frederick's was not a lively way
Ever, but ne'er more nearly gay.

The Vaughans have had his children here
The best part of the mourning-year,
And he comes with them when he can.
I think I never knew a man
So favor'd here ! Howbeit he moves
My spleen by his impartial loves.
His pleasure has some inner spring
Depending not on anything.
Petting our Polly, none e'er smiled
More fondly on his favourite child ;
Yet, playing with his own, it is
With smiles as if it were not his.

He means to go again to sea,
 Now that the wedding's over. "He
 "And his two Babies can't be nurs'd
 "And fed for ever at the Hurst,"
 He says to Vaughan, (who all his life,
 Has loved the lovers of his Wife,)
 And, having been so used to roam,
 He finds that, by himself, at home
 There's scarcely space to breathe. Then, soon
 After the finish'd honeymoon,
 He gives to Emily and John
 The little ones to practise on ;
 And Major-domo, Mrs. Rouse,
 A dear old soul from Ashfield House,
 Will scold the housemaids and the cook,
 Till Emily has learn'd to look
 A little braver than a lamb
 Surprised by dogs without its dam !

Do, dear Aunt, use your influence,
 And try to teach some plain good sense
 To Mary. 'Tis not yet too late
 To make her change her chosen state

Of single foolishness. In truth,
 I fancy that, with fading youth,
 Her will now wavers. Yesterday,
 Though, till the Bride was gone away,
 Joy shone from Mary's loving heart,
 I found her afterwards apart,
 Hysterically sobbing. I
 Knew much too well to ask her why.
 This marrying of Nieces daunts
 The bravest souls of maiden Aunts.
 Though Sister's children often blend
 Sweetly the bonds of child and friend,
 They are but reeds to rest upon.
 When Emily comes back with John
 Her right to go downstairs before
 Aunt Mary will but be the more
 Observed if kindly waived, and how
 Shall these be as they were, when now
 Niece has her John, and Aunt the sense
 Of her superior innocence?
 Somehow, all loves, however fond,
 Prove lieges of the nuptial bond,

And she who dares at this to scoff,
 Finds all the rest in time drop off ;
 While marriage, like a mushroom-ring,
 Spreads its sure circle every Spring.

She twice refused George Vane, you know ;
 Yet, when he died three years ago
 In the Indian war, she put on grey,
 And wears no colours to this day.
 And she it is who charges *me*,
 Dear Aunt, with "inconsistency!"

You heard we lost poor Mr. Vere.
 Mary's pet Parson now is here,
 Who preaches morn and evening too,
 On worldliness, towards my pew,
 I daren't think "nonsense!" though I've tried,
 Because the Devil's on his side.
 Now dear Papa goes murmuring on,
 "Love one another !" like Saint John.
 What happens if we disobey
 He will not positively say ;
 Which leaves, you see, the advantage quite
 With him who put us in a fright.

XL

FREDERICK TO HONORIA.

COUSIN, my thoughts no longer try
To cast the fashion of the sky.
Imagination can extend
Scarcely in part to comprehend
The sweetness of our common food
Ambrosial, which ingratitude
And impious inadvertence waste,
Studious to eat but not to taste.
And who can tell what's yet in store
There, but that earthly things have more
Of all that makes their proper bliss,
And life's an image still of this,
But haply such a glorious one.
As is the rainbow of the sun?
Sweet are your words, but, after all
Their mere reversal may befall



The partners of His glories who
 Daily is crucified anew :
 Splendid privations, martyrdoms
 To which no weak remission comes,
 Perpetual passion for the good
 Of them that feel no gratitude,
 Far circlings, as of planets' fires,
 Round never-to-be-reach'd desires,
 Whatever rapturously sighs
 That life is love, love sacrifice.
 All I am sure of heaven is this :
 Howe'er the mode, I shall not miss
 One true delight which I have known.
 Not on the changeful earth alone
 Shall loyalty remain unmoved
 T'wards everything I ever loved.
 So Heaven's voice calls, like Rachel's voice
 To Jacob in the field, " Rejoice !
 " Serve on some seven more sordid years,
 " Too short for weariness or tears ;
 " Serve on ; then, oh, Beloved, well-tried,
 " Take me for ever as thy Bride !"

XII.

MARY CHURCHILL TO THE DEAN.

CHARLES does me honour, but 'twere vain
To reconsider now again,
And so to doubt the clear-shewn truth
I sought for, and received, when youth,
Being fair, and woo'd by one whose love
Was lovely, fail'd my mind to move.
God bids them by their own will go,
Who ask again the things they know !
Renouncing the dear name of Bride,
I did it not in saintly pride,
But dreading my infirmity,
And ignorance of how to be

Faithful, at once, to the heavenly life,
 And the fond duties of a wife.
 I narrow am and want the art
 To love two things with all my heart.
 Occupied singly in His search,
 Who, in the Mysteries of the Church,
 Returns, and calls them Clouds of Heaven
 I tread a road, straight, hard, and even ;
 But fear to wander all confused,
 By two-fold fealty abused.
 Either should I the one forget,
 Or scantily pay the other's debt ;
 For still it seems to me we make
 Love vain by adding "for His sake ;"
 Nay, at the very thought my breast
 Is fill'd with anguish of unrest !
 You bid me, Father, count the cost.
 I have ; and all that must be lost
 I feel as only women can.
 To make the heart's wealth of some man,
 And through the untender world to move,
 Wrapt safe in his superior love,

How sweet ! Sweet the wife's daily round
 Of duties, and their narrow bound,
 So plain, that to transgress were hard,
 Yet full of tangible reward !
 Her charities, not marr'd like mine,
 With chance of thwarting laws divine,
 The world's regards and just delight
 In one so clearly, kindly right,
 How sweet ! Dear Father, I endure,
 Not without sharp regret, be sure,
 To give up such glad certainty,
 For what, perhaps, may never be.
 For nothing of my state I know,
 But that t'ward heaven I seem to go
 As one who fondly landward hies
 Along a deck that faster flies.
 With every year, meantime, some grace
 Of earthly happiness gives place
 To humbling ills, the very charms
 Of youth being counted henceforth harms :
 To blush already seems absurd ;
 Nor know I whether I should herd

With girls or wives, or sadliest balk
 Maids' merriment or matrons' talk ;
 Nor are men's courtesies her dues
 Who is not good for show nor use.

But strait's the gate of life ! O'er late,
 Besides, 'twere now to change my fate :
 For flowers and fruit of love to form,
 It must be Spring as well as warm.
 The world's delight my soul dejects,
 Revenging all my disrespects,
 Of old, with incapacity
 To chime with even its harmless glee,
 Which sounds, from fields beyond my range,
 Like fairies' music, thin and strange.
 With something like remorse, I grant
 The world has beauty which I want,
 And if, instead of judging it,
 I at its Council chance to sit,
 Or at its gay and order'd Feast,
 My place seems lower than the least.
 The conscience of the life to be
 Smites me with inefficiency,

And makes me all unfit to bless
With comfortable earthliness
The rest-desiring brain of man.
Finally, then, I fix my plan
To dwell with Him that dwells apart
In the highest heaven and lowliest heart ;
Nor will I, to my utter loss,
Look to pluck roses from the Cross.

As for the good of human love,
'Twere countercheck almost enough,
To think that one must die before
The other ; and perhaps 'tis more
In love's last interest to do
Nought the least contrary thereto,
Than to be blest, and be unjust,
Or suffer injustice ; as they must,
Without a miracle, whose pact
Compels to mutual life and act,
Whether love shines, or darkness sleeps
Cold on the spirit's changeful deeps.

Enough if, to my earthly share,
Fall gleams which keep me from despair.

Happy the things we here discern ;
More happy those for which we yearn ;
But measurelessly happy above
All else are those we guess not of !

XIII.

LADY CLITHEROE TO EMILY GRAHAM.

MY dearest Niece, I'm charm'd to hear
The scenery's fine at Windermere,
And glad a six-weeks' wife defers
In the least to wisdom not yet hers.
But, Child, I've no advice to give!
Rules only make it hard to live.
And where's the good of having been
Well-taught from seven to seventeen,
If, married, you may not leave off,
And say, at last, "I'm good enough!"
Neglect your mind. Folly's to that
What to the figure is the fat.
We know, however wise by rule,
Woman is still by nature fool;

And men have sense to like her all
 The more when she is natural.
 'Tis true that, if we choose, we can
 Mock to a miracle the man ;
 But iron in the fire red hot,
 Though 'tis the heat, the fire 'tis not ;
 And who, for such a gain, would pledge
 The babe's and woman's privilege,
 No duties and a thousand rights ?
 Besides, defect love's flow incites,
 As water in a well will run,
 Only the while 'tis drawn upon.

" Point de culte sans mystère" you say
 " And what if that should die away !"

Child, never fear that either could
 Pull from Saint Cupid's face the hood.
 The follies natural to each
 Surpass the other's moral reach.
 Just think how men, with sword and gun,
 Will really fight, and never run ;
 And all is jest ; for they'd have died,
 For sixpence more, on the other side !

A woman's heart must ever warm
 At such odd ways ; and, so, we charm
 By strangeness which, the more they mark,
 The more men get into the dark.
 The marvel, by familiar life,
 Grows, and attaches to the wife
 By whom it grows. Thus, silly Girl,
 To John you'll always be the pearl
 In the oyster of the universe ;
 And, though in time he'll treat you worse,
 He'll love you more, you need not doubt,
 And never, never find you out !
 Not that I'd have you e'er let fall
 A decent ceremonial :
 For John's sake, since 'tis own'd by men
 They never were so blest as when
 They paid us their attentions, 'twill
 Be wise to make him pay them still !
 My Dear, I know that dreadful thought
 That you've been kinder than you ought.
 It almost makes you hate him ! Yet
 'Tis wonderful how men forget,

And how a merciful Providence
Deprives our husbands of all sense
Of kindness past, and makes them deem
We always were what now we seem !
For their own good we must, you know,
However plain the way we go,
Still make it strange with stratagem ;
And instinct tells us that, to them,
'Tis always right to bate their price.
Yet I must say they're rather nice,
And, oh, so easily taken in
To cheat them almost seems a sin !
If a wife cries, a man thinks this
Really shows something is amiss !
And, Dearest, 'twould be most unfair
To John your feelings to compare
With his, or any man's ; for she
Who loves at all loves always ; he,
Who loves far more, loves yet by fits,
And, when the wayward wind remits
To blow, his feelings faint and drop,
Like forge-flames when the bellows stop.

Such things don't trouble you at all,
 When once you know they are natural.
 And, as for getting old, my Dear,
 If you're but prudent, year by year,
 He'll find some far-fetch'd cause the more
 To think you fairer than before.
 My Birthday (for an instance take),
 As I was looking in the Lake,
 Studious if black would best subdue
 The red in my nose, or black with blue,
 Your Uncle, in his loftiest mode,
 Assured me that my face ne'er glow'd
 With such a handsome health ! And yet,
 As you, I doubt not, know, my Pet,
 Albeit we never quarrel, we
 Maltreat each other constantly !
 And, by the way, this is a fact
 On which, in season, you may act :
 Where two are all 'tis hard for half
 To fight : he, when I scold, will laugh
 Till I laugh with him : if 'tis I
 Am scolded, I have but to cry.

Talk breaks no bones, if only one
Waits till the other has quite done.

My love to John ; and, pray, my Dear,
Don't let me see you for a year,
Unless, indeed, ere then you've learn'd
That Beauties wed are blossoms turn'd
To unripe codlings, meant to dwell
In modest shadow hidden well,
Till this green stage again permute
To glow of flowers with good of fruit.
I will not have my patience tried
By your absurd new-married pride,
That scorns the world's slow-gather'd sense,
Ties up the hands of Providence,
Rules babes, before there's hope of one,
Better than mothers e'er have done,
And, for your poor particular,
Neglects delights and graces far
Beyond your crude and thin conceit.
Age has romance almost as sweet,
And much more generous than this
Of yours and John's. With all the bliss

Of the evenings when you coo'd with him
And upset home for your sole whim,
You might have envied, were you wise,
The tears within your Mother's eyes,
Which, I dare say, you did not see.
But let that pass ! Yours yet will be,
I hope, as happy, kind, and true
As lives which now seem void to you.
Have you not seen shop-painters paste
Their gold in sheets, then rub to waste
Full half, and, lo, you read the name ?
Well, Time, my Dear, does much the same
With this unmeaning glare of love.

But, though you yet may much improve,
In marriage, be it still confess'd,
There's little merit at the best.
Some half-a-dozen lives, indeed,
Which else would not have had the need,
Get food and nurture, as the price
Of antedated Paradise ;
But what's that to the varied want
Succour'd by Mary, your dear Aunt,

Who put the bridal crown thrice by,
For that of which virginity,
So used, has hope? She sends her love,
As usual with a proof thereof—
Papa's Discourse, which you, no doubt,
Heard none of, neatly copied out
Whilst we were dancing. All are well.
Adieu, for there's the Luncheon Bell.

XIV.

THE WEDDING SERMON.

I.

THAT good, which does itself not know,
Scarce is. Good families are so,
Less through their coming of good kind,
Than having borne it well in mind ;
And this does all from honour bar,
The ignorance of that they are.
In the heart of the world, alas, for want
Of knowing aright what light souls taunt
As lightness, but which God has made
Such that for even its feeble shade,
Evoked by falsely fair ostents
And soiling of its sacraments,
Great Statesmen, Poets, Warriors, Kings
Have honour and all other things
Gladly accounted nothing, what
Fell fires of Tophet burn forgot !

II.

The truths of love are like the sea
 For clearness and for mystery.
 Of that sweet love which, startling, wakes
 Maiden and Youth, and mostly breaks
 The word of promise to the ear,
 But keeps it, after many a year,
 To the full spirit, how shall I speak?
 My memory with age is weak,
 And I for hopes do oft suspect
 The things I seem to recollect.
 Yet who but must remember well
 'Twas this made heaven intelligible
 As motive, though 'twas small the power
 The heart might have, for even an hour,
 To hold possession of the height
 Of nameless pathos and delight !

III.

In Godhead rise, thither flow back
 All loves, which, as they keep or lack

The appointed course and bound assign'd,
 Are virtue or sin. Love's every kind,
 Lofty or low, of spirit or sense,
 Desire is, or Benevolence.
 He who is fairer, better, higher
 Than all His works, claims all desire,
 And in His Poor, His Proxies, asks
 Our whole benevolence : He tasks,
 Howbeit, His People by their powers ;
 And if, my Children, you, for hours
 Daily, untortur'd in the heart,
 Can worship, and time's other part
 Give, without rough recoils of sense,
 To the claims ingrate of indigence,
 Happy are you, and fit to be
 Wrought to rare heights of sanctity,
 For the humble to grow humbler at.
 But if the flying spirit falls flat,
 After the modest spell of prayer
 That saves the day from sin and care,
 And the upward eye a void descries,
 And praises are hypocrisies,

And, in the soul, o'erstrain'd for grace,
 A godless anguish grows apace ;
 Or, if impartial charity
 Seems, in the act, a sordid lie,
 Do not infer you cannot please
 God, or that He his promises
 Postpones, but be content to love
 No more than He accounts enough,
 Leaving Christ's right and left in heaven
 To be to them unenvied given
 For whom it is prepared. Let us,
 Who are but babes in Christ, think thus,
 (Admiring them whose skill it suits
 To adore, unscath'd, God's attributes,)

That all ambition bears a curse,
 And none, if height metes error, worse
 Than his who sets his hope on more
 Godliness than God made him for.

At least, leave distant worlds alone,
 Till you are native to your own ;
 Account them poor enough who want
 Any good thing which you can grant ;

And fathom well the depths of life
 In loves of Husband and of Wife,
 Child, Mother, Father ; simple keys
 To all the Christian mysteries.

IV.

The love of marriage claims, above
 All special kinds, the name of love,
 As being, though not so saintly high
 As what seeks Heaven with single eye,
 Sole perfect. Equal and entire,
 Therein Benevolence, Desire,
 Elsewhere ill-joined or found apart,
 Become the pulses of one heart,
 Which now contracts, and now dilates,
 And, each to the height exalting, mates
 Self-seeking to self-sacrifice.
 Nay, in its subtle paradise
 (When purest) this one love unites
 All modes of these two opposites,
 All balanced in accord so rich
 Who may determine which is which ?



Chiefly God's love does in it live,
 And nowhere else so sensitive ;
 For each is all that the other's eye,
 In the vague vast of Deity,
 Can comprehend and so contain
 As still to touch and ne'er to strain
 The fragile nerves of joy. And, then,
 'Tis such a wise goodwill to men
 And politic economy
 As in a prosperous State we see,
 Where every plot of common land
 Is yielded to some private hand
 To fence about and cultivate.
 Does narrowness its praise abate ?
 Nay, the infinite of man is found
 But in the beating of its bound,
 And, if a brook its banks o'erpass,
 'Tis not a sea, but a morass.

v.

Without God's Word, what wildest guess
 Of Love's most innocent loftiness

Had dared to dream of its own height !
 But that bold sun-gleam quench'd the night,
 Shewing Heaven's happiest symbol, where
 The torch of Psyche flash'd despair ;
 Proclaiming love, even in divine
 Realms, to be male and feminine ;
 Foretelling, in the Song of Songs,
 Which time makes clear as it prolongs,
 Christ's nuptials with the Church, (far more,
 My Children, than a metaphor,)
 And aye by names of Bride and Wife,
 Husband and Bridegroom, heaven's own life
 Picturing, so proving theirs to be
 The earth's unearthliest sanctity.

Herein I speak of heights, and heights
 Are hardly scaled. The best delights
 Of even this homeliest passion, are
 In the most perfect souls so rare,
 That they who feel them are as men
 Sailing the Southern ocean, when,
 At midnight, they look up, and eye
 The starry Cross, and a strange sky



Of brighter stars ; and sad thoughts come
To each how far he is from home.

The Truth, when most it thwarts our wills
In show, then most in fact fulfils.
Love's subtlest nuptial sweetness see
In the doctrine of virginity !
For what's the virgin's special crown,
But that which Love in faith lays down,
Transmuted, without shade of loss,
By the charm'd contact of the Cross,
To what love nuptial oft makes vow,
With sighs, to be, but sees not how ?
Could lovers, at their dear wish, blend,
'Twould kill the bliss which they intend
For joy is love's obedience
Against the law of natural sense ;
And those perpetual yearnings sweet
Of lives which dream that they can meet
Are given that lovers never may
Be without sacrifice to lay
On the high altar of true love,
With tears of vestal joy. To move

Frantic, like comets to our bliss,
 Forgetting that we always miss,
 And so to seek and fly the sun,
 By turns, around which love should run,
 Perverts the ineffable delight
 Of service guerdon'd with full sight
 And pathos of a hopeless want,
 To an unreal victory's vaunt,
 And plaint of an unreal defeat,
 Languor and passion. Misconceit
 May also be of the virgin will,
 Whose goal is nuptial blessing still,
 And whose true being doth subsist
 There where the outward forms are miss'd,
 In those who learn and keep the sense
 Divine of "due benevolence,"
 Seeking for aye, without alloy
 Of selfish thought, another's joy,
 And finding, in degrees unknown,
 That which in act they shunn'd, their own.
 For all delights of earthly love
 Are shadows of the heavens, and move

As other shadows do : they flee
 From him that follows them ; but he
 Who flies, for ever finds his feet
 Embraced by their pursuings sweet.

VI.

Yet each must learn that Christ's Cross is
 Safety, ere he can find it bliss.
 The powers that Nature's powers can stem
 Must come to us, not we to them.
 The heavenward soul no measure keeps,
 But, lark-like, soars by wayward leaps ;
 And highest achievements here befall,
 As elsewhere, expectations small.
 Then, even in love humane, do I
 Not counsel aspirations high,
 So much as sweet and regular
 Use of the good in which we are.
 As when a man along the ways
 Walks, and a sudden music plays,
 His step unchanged, he steps in time,
 So let your Grace with Nature chime.

Her primal forces burst, like straws,
The bonds of uncongenial laws,
And those who conquer her are they
Who comprehend her and obey ;
Which let your one ambition be ;
For pride of soaring sanctity
Revolts to hell, and that which needs
The world's high places, and succeeds,
Suffers as if a level shock'd
The upstepping foot. Be ye not mock'd :
Right life is glad as well as just,
And, rooted strong in " This I must,"
It bears aloft the blossom gay
And zephyr-toss'd, of " This I may ;"
Whereby the complex heavens rejoice
In fruits of uncommanded choice.
Be this your rule : seeking delight,
Esteem success the test of right ;
For 'gainst God's will much may be done,
But nought enjoy'd, and pleasures none
Exist, but, like to springs of steel,
Active no longer than they feel



The checks that make them serve the soul,
 They take their vigour from control.
 A man need only keep but well
 The Church's indispensable
 First precepts, and she then allows,
 Nay, more, she bids him leave, for his spouse,
 Even his heavenly Father's awe,
 At times, and her, his Mother's, law,
 Construed in its extremer sense.
 Jehovah's mild magnipotence
 Smiles to behold His children play
 In their own free and childish way,
 And can His fullest praise descry
 In the exuberant liberty
 Of those who, having understood
 The glory of the Central Good,
 And how souls ne'er may match or merge,
 But as they thitherward converge,
 Take, in love's innocent gladness, part
 With infantine, untroubled heart,
 And faith that, straight t'wards heaven's far Spring,
 Sleeps, like the swallow, on the wing.

VII.

Of wedlock's perils all the worst
By this mistake are bred and nurs'd :
Lovers, once married, deem their bond
Then perfect, scanning nought beyond
For love to do but to sustain
The spousal hour's completed gain.
But time and a right life alone
Fulfil what is that hour foreshown.
The Bridegroom and the Bride withal
Are but unwrought material
Of marriage ; nay, so far is love,
Thus crown'd, from being thereto enough,
Without the long, compulsive awe
Of duty, that the bond of law
Does oftener marriage-love evoke,
Than love, which does not wear the yoke
Of legal vows, submits to be
Self-rein'd from ruinous liberty.
Lovely is love ; but age well knows
'Twas law which kept the lover's vows

Inviolatè through the year or years
 Of worship pieced with panic fears,
 When she who lay within his breast
 Seem'd of all women perhaps the best,
 But not the whole, of womankind,
 Or love, in his yet wayward mind,
 Had ghastly doubts its precious life
 Was pledged for aye to the wrong wife.

Could it be else ? A youth pursues
 A maid, whom chance, not he, did choose,
 Till to his strange arms hurries she
 In a despair of modesty ;
 Then, simply and without pretence
 Of insight or experience,
 They plight their vows. The parents say,
 " We cannot speak them yea or nay ;
 " The thing proceedeth from the Lord !"
 And wisdom still approves their word ;
 For God created so these two
 They match as well as others do
 That take more pains, and trust Him less
 Who rarely fails, if ask'd, to bless

His children's helpless ignorance
 And blind election of life's chance.
 Verily, choice not matters much,
 If but the woman's truly such,
 And the young man has led the life
 Without which how shall e'er the wife
 Be the one woman in the world !
 Love's sensitive tendrils sicken, curl'd
 Round Folly's former stay ; for 'tis
 The doom of all unsanction'd bliss
 To mock some good that, gain'd, keeps still
 The taint of the rejected ill.

VIII.

Howbeit, though both be perfect, she
 Of whom the maid was prophecy,
 As yet lives not, and Love rebels
 Against the law of any else ;
 And, as a steed takes blind alarm,
 Disowns the rein, and hunts his harm,
 So, misdespairing word and act
 May now perturb the happiest pact.

The more, indeed, is love, the more
 Peril to love is now in store.
 Against it nothing can be done
 But only this : leave ill alone !
 Who tries to mend his wife succeeds
 As he who knows not what he needs.
 He much affronts a worth as high
 As his, and that equality
 Of spirits in which abide the grace
 And joy of her subjected place ;
 And does the still growth check and blurr
 Of contraries, confusing her
 Who better knows what he desires
 Than he, and to that mark aspires
 With perfect zeal, and a deep wit
 Which nothing helps but faith in it.

So, loyally o'erlooking all
 In which love's promise short may fall
 Of full performance, honour that
 As won, which aye love worketh at !
 It is but as the pedigree
 Of perfectness which is to be

That our best good can honour claim ;
 Yet honour to deny were shame
 And robbery ; for it is the mould
 Wherein to beauty runs the gold
 Of good intention, and the stay
 That leads aloft the ivy stray
 Of human sensibilities.

Such honour, with a conduct wise
 In common things, as, not to steep
 The lofty mind of love in sleep
 Of over much familiarity ;
 Not to degrade its kind caress,
 As those do that can feel no more,
 So give themselves to pleasures o'er ;
 Not to let morning-sloth destroy
 The evening-flower, domestic joy ;
 Not by uxoriousness to chill
 The warm devotion of her will
 Who can but half her love confer
 On him that cares for nought but her ;—
 These, and like obvious prudencies
 Observed, he's safest that relies,

For the hope she will not always seem,
 Caught, but a laurel or a stream,
 On time ; on her unsearchable
 Love-wisdom ; on their work done well,
 Discreet with mutual aid ; on might
 Of shared affliction and delight ;
 On pleasures that so childish be
 They're 'shamed to let the children see,
 By which life keeps the valleys low
 Where love does naturally grow ;
 On much whereof hearts have account,
 Though heads forget ; on babes, chief fount
 Of union, and for which babes are
 No less than this for them, nay far
 More, for the bond of man and wife
 To the very verge of future life
 Strengthens, and yearns for brighter day,
 While others, with their use, decay,
 And, though love-nuptial purpose keeps
 Of offspring, as the centre sleeps
 Within the wheel, transmitting thence
 Fury to the circumference,

Love's self the noblest offspring is,
 And sanction of the nuptial kiss ;
 Lastly, on either's primal curse,
 Which help and sympathy reverse
 To blessings.

IX.

God, who may be well
 Jealous of His chief miracle,
 Bids sleep the meddling soul of man,
 Through the long process of this plan,
 Whereby, from his unweeting side,
 The Wife's created, and the Bride,
 That chance one of her strange, sweet sex
 He to his glad life did annex,
 Grows more and more, by day and night,
 The one in the whole world opposite
 Of him, and in her nature all
 So suited and reciprocal
 To his especial form of sense,
 Affection, and intelligence,

That, whereas, in its earlier day,
 The least flaw threaten'd love's decay,
 No crime could now, on either's part,
 Do more than make the other start,
 And, full of pity, say, "It is
 I, somehow I, who have done this ;"
 And, whereas love at first had strange
 Relapses into lust of change,
 It now finds (wondrous this, but true !)
 The long-accustom'd only new,
 And the untried common ; and, whereas
 An equal seeming danger was
 Of likeness lacking joy and force,
 Or difference reaching to divorce,
 Now can the finish'd lover see
 Marvel of me most far from me,
 Whom without pride he may admire,
 Without Narcissus' doom desire,
 Serve without selfishness, and love
 "Even as himself," in sense above
 Niggard "as much," yea, as she is
 The only part of him that's his.

x.

I do not say love's youth returns ;
 Love's youth which so divinely yearns !
 But just esteem of present good
 Shews all regret such gratitude
 As if the sparrow in her nest,
 Her woolly young beneath her breast,
 Should these despise, and sorrow for
 Her five blue eggs that are no more.
 Nor say I the fruit has quite the scope
 Of the flower's spiritual hope.
 Love's best is service, and of this,
 Howe'er devout, use dulls the bliss.
 Though love is all of earth that's dear,
 Its home, my Children, is not here :
 The pathos of eternity
 Does in its fullest pleasure sigh.

Be grateful and most glad thereof.
 Parting, as 'tis, is pain enough.
 If love, by joy, has learn'd to give
 Praise with the nature sensitive,

At last, to God, we then possess
 The end of mortal happiness,
 And henceforth very well may wait
 The unbarring of the golden gate
 Wherethrough, already, faith can see
 That apter to each wish than we
 Is God, and curious to bless
 Better than we devise or guess ;
 Not without condescending craft
 To disappoint with joy, and waft
 Our vessels frail, when worst He mocks
 The heart with breakers and with rocks.
 To happiest havens. You have heard
 Your bond death-sentenced by His Word.
 What, if, in heaven, the name be o'er,
 Because the thing is so much more ?
 All are, 'tis writ, as angels there,
 Nor male nor female. Each a stair
 In the hierarchical ascent
 Of active and recipient
 Affections, what if all are both
 By turn, as they themselvss betroth

To adoring what is next above,
Or serving what's below their love ?

Of this we are certified, that we
Are shaped here for eternity,
So that a careless word will make
Its dint upon the form we take
For ever. If, then, years have wrought
Two strangers to become, in thought,
Will, and affection, but one man
For likeness, as none others can
Without like process, shall this tree,
The king of all the forest, be,
Alas, the only one of all
That shall not lie where it doth fall ?
And this sole quenchless flame, here nurs'd
By everything, yea, when reversed,
Blazing, like torch, the brighter, wink,
Flicker, and into darkness shrink,
When all else burns, baleful or brave,
In the keen air beyond the grave,
That air love gasps for, sickening here
Out of its native atmosphere ?

It cannot be. The Scriptures tell
Only what's inexpressible,
And, 'gainst each word, to make it right,
Themselves propound the opposite.
Beware ; for fiends in triumph laugh
O'er him who learns the truth by half !
Beware ; for God will not endure
For men to make their hope more pure
Than His good promise, or require
Another than the five-string'd lyre
Which He has vow'd again to the hands
Devout of him who understands
To tune it justly here ! Beware
The Powers of Darkness and the Air,
Which make of none effect man's hope,
Bepraising heaven's etherial cope,
But covering with their cloudy cant
Its counterpoising adamant,
Which strengthens ether for the flight
Of angels, makes and measures height,
And in materiality
Exceeds our Earth's in such degree

As all else Earth exceeds? Do I
 Here utter aught too dark or high?
 Have you not seen a bird's beak slay
 Proud Psyche, on a summer's day?
 Down fluttering drop the frail wings four,
 Missing the weight which made them soar.
 Spirit is heavy nature's wing,
 And is not rightly anything
 Without its burthen, whereas this,
 Wingless, at least a maggot is,
 And, wing'd, is honour and delight
 Increasing endlessly with height.

XI.

You unto whom that rarest chance
 Fell not, which makes a month's romance,
 Know ye, that few wed whom they would;
 And this, like all God's laws, is good.
 For nought's so sad the whole world o'er
 As much love which has once been more.
 Glorious for light is the earliest love;
 But worldly things, in the rays thereof,

Extend their shadows, every one
 False as the image which the sun
 At noon or eve dwarfs or protracts.
 A perilous lamp to light men's acts !
 By Heaven's kind, impartial plan,
 Well-wived is he that's truly man
 If but the woman's womanly,
 As such a man's is sure to be.
 Joy of all eyes and pride of life
 Perhaps she is not; the likelier wife !
 If it be thus ; if you have known,
 (As who has not?) some heavenly one,
 Whom the dull background of despair
 Help'd to shew forth supremely fair ;
 If memory, still remorseful, shapes
 Young Passion bringing Eshcol grapes
 To travellers in the Wilderness,
 This truth will make regret the less :
 Mighty in love as graces are,
 God's ordinance is mightier far ;
 And he who is but just and kind
 And patient, shall for guerdon find,

Before long, that the body's bond
Is all else utterly beyond
In power of love to actualise
The soul's bond which it signifies,
And even to deck a wife with grace
External in the form and face.
A five years' wife, and not yet fair?
Blame let the man, not Nature, bear!
For as the sun warming a bank
Where last year's grass droops grey and dank
Evokes the violet, bids disclose
In yellow crowds the fresh primrose,
And fox-glove hang her flushing head,
So vernal love, where all seems dead,
Makes beauty abound.

Then was that nought,
That trance of joy beyond all thought,
The vision, in one, of womanhood?
Nay, for all women holding good,
Should marriage such a prologue want
'Twere sordid and most ignorant
Profanity! But, having this
'Tis honour now, and future bliss.

XV.

FELIX TO HONORIA.

DEAREST, my Love and Wife, 'tis long
Ago I closed the unfinish'd song
Which never could be finish'd ; nor
Will ever Poet utter more
Of love than I did, watching well
To lure to speech the unspeakable !
" Why, having won her, do I woo ?"
That final strain to the last height flew
Of written joy, which wants the smile
And voice that are indeed, the while
They last, the very things you speak,
Honoriam, who mak'st music weak
With ways that say, " Shall I not be
As kind to all as Heaven to me !"

And yet, ah ! twenty-fold my Bride,
Rising, this twentieth festal-tide,
From you soft sleeping, on this day
Of days, some words I long to say,
Some words superfluously sweet
Of fresh assurance, thus to greet
Your waking eyes, which never grow
Weary of telling what I know
So well, yet only well enough
To wish for further news, my Love !

Here, in this early autumn dawn,
By windows opening on the lawn,
Where sunshine seems asleep, though bright,
And shadows yet are sharp with night ;
And, further on, the wealthy wheat
Bends in a golden drowse, how sweet
To sit and cast my careless looks
Around my walls of well-read books,
Wherein is all that stands redeem'd
From time's huge wreck, all men have dream'd
Of truth, and all by poets known
Of feeling, and in weak sort shown,

And, turning to my heart again,
 To find I have what makes them vain,
 The thanksgiving mind, which wisdom sums,
 And you, whereby it freshly comes
 As on that morning, (can there be
 Twenty-two years 'twixt it and me ?)
 When, thrill'd with hopeful love, I rose
 And came in haste to Sarum Close,
 Past many a homestead slumbering white
 In lonely and pathetic light,
 Merely to fancy which drawn blind
 Of thirteen had my Love behind,
 And in her sacred neighbourhood
 To feel that sweet scorn of all good
 But her, which let the wise forefend
 When wisdom learns to comprehend !

Dearest, as each returning May
 I see the season new and gay
 With new joy and astonishment,
 And Nature's infinite ostent
 Of lovely flowers in wood and mead
 That weet not whether any heed,

So see I, daily wondering, you,
And worship with a passion new
The Heaven that visibly allows
Its grace to go about my house,
The partial Heaven, that, though I err
And mortal am, gave all to her
Who gave herself to me. Yet I
Boldly thank Heaven, (and so defy
The beggarly soul'd humbleness
Which fears God's bounty to confess,)
That I was fashion'd with a mind
Seeming for this great gift design'd,
So naturally it moved above
All sordid contraries of love,
Strengthen'd in youth with discipline
Of light, to follow the divine
Vision, (which ever to the dark
Is such a plague as was the ark
In Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron), still
Discerning with the docile will
Which comes of full persuaded thought,
That intimacy in love is nought

Without pure reverence, whereas this,
In tearfullest banishment, is bliss.

And so, dearest Honoria, I
Have never learn'd the weary sigh
Of those that to their love-feasts went,
Fed, and forgot the Sacrament ;
And not a trifle now occurs
But sweet initiation stirs
Of new discover'd joy, and lends
To feeling change that never ends ;
And duties, which the many irk,
Are made all wages and no work.

How sing of such things, save to her,
Love's self, so love's interpreter !
How the supreme rewards confess
Which crown the austere voluptuousness
Of heart, that earns, in midst of wealth,
The appetite of want and health ;
Relinquishes the pomp of life
And beauty to the pleasant Wife
At home, and does all joy despise
As out of place but in her eyes !

How praise the years and gravity
That make each favour seem to be
A lovelier weakness for her lord ?
And, ah, how find the tender word
To tell aright of love that glows
The fairer for the fading rose ?
Of frailty which can weight the arm
To lean with thrice its girlish charm ?
Of grace which, like this autumn day,
Is not the sad one of decay,
Yet one whose pale brow pondereth
The far-off majesty of death ?
How tell the crowd, whom passion rends,
That love grows mild as it ascends ?
That joy's most high and distant mood
Is lost, not found in dancing blood ;
Yet that kind acts and smiling eyes,
And all those fond realities
Which are love's words, in us mean more
Delight than twenty years before ?
Think, Dear, how men would make their mirth
Over an Epic of the Hearth,

Its high, eventful passages
 Consisting, say, of scenes like these :—

One morning, contrary to law,
 Which, for the most, we held in awe,
 Commanding either not to intrude
 On the other's place of solitude
 Or solitary mind, for fear
 Of coming there when God was near,
 And finding so what should be known
 To Him who is merciful alone,
 And views the working ferment base
 Of sleeping flesh and waking grace,
 Not as we view, our kindness check'd
 By likeness of our own defect,
 I, rashly entering her room,
 Beauty's at once and Virtue's loom,
 Mark'd, here, across a careless chair,
 A ball-dress flung, as light as air,
 And, here, beside a silken couch,
 Pillows which did the pressure vouch
 Of pious knees, (sweet piety !
 Of goodness made and charity,

If gay looks told the heart's glad sense,
 Much rather than of penitence,)
 And, on the couch, an open book,
 And written list—I did not look,
 Yet just in her clear writing caught :—
 “ Habitual faults of life and thought
 “ Which most I need deliverance from.”
 I turn'd aside, and saw her come
 Adown the filbert-shaded way,
 Illustrious with her usual gay
 Hypocrisy of perfectness,
 Which made her heart, and mine no less,
 So happy ! And she cried to me,
 “ You lose by breaking rules, you see !
 “ Your treat to-night is now half-gone
 “ Of seeing my new ball-dress on.”
 And, meeting so my lovely Wife,
 A passing pang, to think that life
 Was mortal, when I saw her laugh,
 Shaped in my mind this epitaph :
 “ Faults had she, child of Adam's stem,
 “ But only Heaven knew of them.”

Or thus :

Through female fraud intense,
 Or the good luck of innocence,
 Or both, my Wife, with whom I plan
 To pass calm evenings when I can,
 After the chattering girls and boys
 Are gone, or the less grateful noise
 Is over, of grown tongues that chime
 Untruly, once upon a time
 Prevail'd with me to change my mind
 Of reading out how Rosalind
 In Arden jested, and to go
 Where people whom I ought to know,
 She said, would meet that night. And I,
 Who sometimes murmur'd, "I will try
 "Some dish more sharply sauced than
 this

"Milk-soup men call domestic bliss,"
 Took, as she, laughing, bade me take,
 Our eldest boy's brown wide-awake
 And straw box of cigars, and went
 Where, like a careless parliament

Of gods olympic, six or eight
 Authors and else, reputed great,
 Were met in council jocular
 On many things, pursuing far
 Truth, only for the chase's glow,
 Quick as they caught her letting go,
 Or, when at fault the view-halloo,
 Playing about the missing clue.
 And coarse jests came ; " But gods are coarse,"
 Thought I, yet not without remorse,
 While memory of the gentle words,
 Wife, Mother, Sister, flash'd like swords.
 And so, after two hours of wit,
 That left a hole where'er it hit,
 I said I would not stay to sup,
 Because my Wife was sitting up,
 And walk'd home with a sense that I
 Was no match for that company.
 Smelling of smoke, which, always kind,
 Honoria said she did not mind,
 I sipp'd her tea, saw Baby scold
 And finger at the muslin fold,

Through which he push'd his nose at last,
 And choked and chuckled, feeding fast ;
 And, he asleep and sent upstairs,
 She rang the servants in to prayers ;
 And after heard what men of fame
 Had urged 'gainst this and that. "For
 shame !"

She said, but argument shew'd not.
 "If I had answer'd thus," I thought,
 "'Twould not have pass'd for very wise.
 "But I have not her voice and eyes.
 "Howe'er it be, I'm glad of home,
 "Yea, very glad at heart to come,
 "From clatter of those clever daws,
 "Profaning love, confusing laws,
 "To lean a happy head upon
 "The bosom of my foolish swan."

Or thus :

For many a dreadful day,
 In sea-side lodgings sick she lay,
 Noteless of love, nor seem'd to hear
 The sea, on one side, thundering near,

Nor, on the other, the loud Ball
Held nightly in the public hall ;
Nor vex'd they my short slumbers, though
I woke up if she breathed too low.
Thus, for three months, with terrors rife,
The pending of her precious life
I watch'd o'er ; and the danger, at last,
The kind Physician said, was past.
Howbeit, for seven harsh weeks the East
Breathed witheringly, and Spring's growth ceased ;
And so she only did not die ;
Until the bright and blighting sky
Changed into cloud, and the sick flowers
Remember'd their perfumes, and showers
Of warm, small rain refreshing flew
Before the South, and the Park grew,
In three nights, thick with green. Then she
Revived no less than flower and tree,
In the mild air, and, the fourth day,
Look'd supernaturally gay
With large, thanksgiving eyes, that shone,
The while I tied her bonnet on,

So that I led her to the glass,
And bade her see how fair she was,
And how love visibly could shine.
Profuse of hers, desiring mine,
And mindful I had loved her most
When beauty seem'd a vanish'd boast,
She laugh'd. I press'd her then to me,
Nothing but soft humility ;
Nor e'er enhanced she with such charms
Her acquiescence in my arms.
And, by her sweet love-weakness made
Courageous, powerful, and glad,
In the superiority
Of heavenly affection, I
Perceived that utter love is all
The same as to be rational,
And that the mind and heart of love,
Which think they cannot do enough,
Are truly the everlasting doors
Wherethrough, all unpetition'd, pours
The eternal pleasance. Wherefore we
Had innermost tranquillity,

And breathed one life with such a sense
 Of friendship and of confidence,
 That, recollecting the sure word :
 " If two of you are in accord,
 " On earth, as touching any boon
 " Which ye shall ask, it shall be done
 " In heaven," we ask'd that heaven's bliss
 Might ne'er be any less than this ;
 And, for that hour, we seem'd to have
 The secret of the joy we gave.

How sing of such things, save to her,
 Love's self, so love's interpreter ?
 How read from such a homely page
 In the ear of this unhomely age !
 'Tis now as when the Prophet cried :
 " The nation hast Thou multiplied,
 " But Thou hast not increased the joy !"
 And yet, ere wrath or rot destroy
 Of England's state the ruin fair,
 Oh, might I so its charm declare,
 That, in new Lands, in far off years,
 Delighted, he should cry that hears :

“ Great is the Land that somewhat best
“ Works, to the wonder of the rest !
“ We, in our day, have better done
“ This thing or that than any one ;
“ And who but, still admiring, sees
“ How excellent for images
“ Was Greece, for laws how wise was Rome ;
“ But read this Poet, and say if home
“ And private love did e’er so smile
“ As in that ancient English Isle !”

NOTE TO "THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE"

THE plan of "The Angel in the House," as it was schemed more than fourteen years ago, included a final section on the subject of the hope which remains for individual love in death. It is well, perhaps, for the interests of poetry in this great and hitherto unapproached theme, that my weak voice has been hushed. I no longer have, at every step, the needful encouragement of an approval which was all that my heart valued of fame; I can no longer feel that lively pleasure in the perfection of verbal expression for its own sake, without which such perfection cannot be obtained; nor have I the aid of a criticism to which, I am bound to confess,—now the critic does not forbid the confession,—that every page in the foregoing work is more or less indebted for such truth and grace as it may have.

When, however, I commenced this Poem, I foresaw that its composition must extend over so long a period that there was much likelihood of my never being able to finish it. I provided, as far as possible, against the evils of that chance, by so planning my work that it should not be fragmentary in form, nor wholly incomplete in the treatment of its subject, in the event of its being terminated at any one of its several stages of publication. I trust I have so scattered through these four Books the germs which were to have been unfolded in the concluding Part, that every person reading them with attention will be able to perceive in them no uncertain utterance of the main foundations of the hope which is the ustification of the entire Poem.

TAMERTON CHURCH-TOWER,

AND OTHER

STUDIES IN VERSE.

CHIEFLY PUBLISHED IN THE YEARS 1844 AND 1853.



TAMERTON CHURCH-TOWER.

Inscribed, with the Writer's warm regards,

TO

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, Esq., M.P.

1.

WE left the Church at Tamerton
In gloomy western air ;
To greet the day we gallop'd on,
A merry-minded pair.
The hazy East hot noon did bode ;
Our horses snuff'd the dawn ;
We made ten Cornish miles of road
Before the dew was gone.
We clomb the hill where Lanson's Keep
Fronts Dartmoor's distant ridge ;
Thence trotted South ; walk'd down the steep
That slants to Gresson Bridge ;

And paused awhile, where Tamar waits,
 In many a shining coil,
 And teeming Devon separates
 From Cornwall's sorry soil.

2.

Our English skies contain'd, that Spring,
 A Caribbean sun ;
 The singing birds forgot to sing,
 The rivulets to run.
 For three noons past, the skies had frown'd,
 Obscured with blighting shades,
 That only mock'd the thirsty ground
 And unrejoicing glades.
 To-day, before the noon was nigh,
 Bright-skirted vapours grew,
 And on the sky hung languidly ;
 The sky was languid too.
 Our horses dropp'd their necks, and nosed
 The dusty wayside grass,
 Whilst we beneath still boughs reposed
 And watch'd the water pass.
 We spoke of plighted Bertha : Frank
 Shot pebbles in the stream ;

And I lay by him on the bank ;
 But dreamt no lover's dream.
 She was a blythe and bashful maid,
 Much blushing in her glee ;
 Yet gracing all she did and said
 With sweet sufficiency.
 " Is Blanche as fair ?" ask'd I, who yearn'd
 To feel my life complete ;
 To taste unselfish pleasures earn'd
 By service strict and sweet.
 " Well, some say fairer : she'll surprise
 Your heart with crimson lips ;
 Fat underlids, that hold bright eyes
 In laughing half-eclipse ;
 Alluring locks, done up with taste
 Behind her dainty ears ;
 And manners full of wayward haste,
 Tho' facile as the deer's."

3.

" You paint a leaflet, here and there ;
 And not the blossom ; tell
 What mysteries of good and fair
 These blazon'd letters spell."

4.

" Her mouth and teeth, by Cupid's bow !
 Are letters spelling, 'kiss ;'
 And, witchingly withdrawn below
 Twin worlds of baby-bliss,
 Her waist, so soft and small, may mean,
 ' O, when will some one come
 ' To make me catch my breath between
 ' His finger and his thumb ! ' "

5.

My life, 'twas like a land of dreams,
 Where nothing noble throve :
 Dull seem'd it as to maiden seems
 The verse that's not of love.
 " See where," sigh'd I, " the water dim
 Repeats, with leaden hue,
 The fervid sun, the cloud's hot rim,
 The gap of dazzling blue !"
 Quoth Frank, " I do, and thence foresee
 And all too plainly scan
 Some sentimental homily
 On Duty, Death, or Man."

" 'Tis this ;" said I, " our senses mar,
 Ev'n so, sweet Nature's face,
 Unless by love revived they are,
 Or lit by heavenly grace.
 Below the hazel talks the rill ;
 My heart speaks not again ;
 The solemn cloud, the stately hill,
 I look on each in vain.
 Sure he for whom no Power shall strike
 This darkness into day—"

" Is damn'd," said Frank, who morall'd like
 The Fool in an old Play.
 " That's true !" cried I, " yet, as the worm
 That sickens ere it change—"

" Or as the pup that nears the term
 At which pups have the mange—
 Pooh ! Come, Man, let us on," he said,
 " For now the storm is nigh !"

And while we rode quaint sense we read
 Within the changing sky.
 Above us bent a prophet wild,
 Pointing to hidden harm ;
 Beyond, a magic woman smiled,
 And wove some wondrous charm ;

Past that, a censer jetted smoke :
 Black convolutions roll'd
To heaven, and caught the light, and broke
 In crowns of shining gold.

6.

The gaps of blue shrank fast in span ;
 The long-forgotten breeze,
By lazy starts and fits, began
 To stir the higher trees.
At noon, we came to Tavistock ;
 And sunshine still was there,
But gloomy Dartmoor seem'd to mock
 Its weak and yellow glare.
The swallows, in the wrathful light,
 Were pitching up and down ;
A string of rooks made rapid flight,
 Due southward, o'er the town ;
And children ran from field and wood,
 Or under elm and ash,
Hugging great sheaves of king-cups, stood
 To watch the first bright flash.



7.

Now, baiting at the Tiger-Inn,
We talk'd by windows wide,
Of Blanche and all my unseen kin,
Who did our coming bide.
The heavy sign-board swung and shriek'd,
In dark air whirl'd the vane,
Blinds flapp'd, dust rose, and, straining, creak'd
The shaken window-pane;
And just o'erhead a huge cloud flung,
For earnest of its stores,
A few calm drops, that struck among
The light-leaved sycamores.
Hot to be gone, Frank rose and eyed
Dark cloud and swinging branch ;
But less long'd he to greet his Bride,
Than I to look on Blanche.
Her name, pair'd still with praise at home,
Would make my pulses start ;
The hills between us were become
A weight upon my heart.
" Behold," I cried, " the storm comes not
The northern heavens grow fair."

"Look South," said Frank, "'tis one wide blot
Of thunder-threatening air."

The string of rooks had travell'd on,

Against the southern shroud,

And, like some snaky skeleton,

Lay twisted in the cloud.

"No storm to-day !" said I, "for see

Yon black thing travels south."

We follow'd soon ; our spirits free,

Our bodies slaked from drouth.

I rode in silence ; Frank, with tongue

Made lax by too much port,

Soliloquizing, said or sung

After this tipsy sort.

"Yea, nerves they are the Devil's mesh,

And pups begin quite blind,

And health is oft-times in the flesh,

And measles in the mind !

"Foolish and fair was Joan without ;

Foolish and foul within ;

High as a hunted pig his snout,

She carried a foolish chin.

The Boy beheld, and brisk rose he
 At this badly painted fly :
 That boys less wise than fish will be
 Is cause why men do sigh."

8.

On, on we toil'd amidst the blaze
 From Dartmoor's ridges bare ;
 Beneath the hush'd and scorching haze,
 And through the twinkling air ;
 Along the endless mountain-side,
 That seem'd with us to move ;
 Past dreary mine-mouths, far and wide ;
 Huge dross-heap, wheel, and groove ;
 Dark towns by disembowell'd hills,
 Where swarthy tribes abode,
 Who, in hard rocks with harder wills,
 Pursued the crooked lodé ;
 Up heights, that seem'd against us match'd ;
 Until, from table-land,
 Before the teasing midge was hatch'd,
 We hail'd the southern strand.
 Then pleasantly on even ground,
 And through the lighter air,

We paced along and breath'd around,
 A merry-minded pair.
 A western night of even cloud
 Suck'd in the sultry disk ;
 Bright racks look'd on, a fiery crowd,
 To seamen boding risk ;
 The late crow wing'd his silent way
 Across the shadowy East ;
 The gnat danced out his little day,
 His ceaseless singing ceased ;
 Along the dim horizon round
 Fled faint electric fires ;
 Blue glow-worms lit the fresher ground
 By moisture-harbouring briers ;
 Far northward twinkled lonely lights,
 The peopled vales among ;
 In front, between the gaping heights,
 The mystic ocean hung.

9.

Our weary spirits flagg'd beneath
 The still and loaded air ;
 We left behind the freër heath,
 A moody-minded pair.



With senses slack and sick of mirth,
 Tho' near the happy goal,
 I murmur'd, fearing nought on earth
 Could quite content the soul :
 "Suppose your love prove such a light
 As yonder glow-worm's lamp,
 That gleams, at distance, strong and bright,
 Approach'd, burns weak and damp.
 Perchance, by much of bliss aroused,
 Your heart will pant for more ;
 And then the worm of want lies housed
 Within the sweet fruit's core !
 Far worse, if, led by fancy blind,
 But undeceiv'd by use—"

"I dream," yawn'd Frank, "and wake to find
 My Goddess a green goose !"

"Vain, vain," said I, "is worldly weal :
 We faint, within the heart,
 For good which all we see and feel
 Foreshadows but in part."

Frank answer'd, "What you faint for, win !
 Faint not, but forward press.
 Heav'n proffers all : 'twere grievous sin
 To live content in less.

The Sun rolls by us every day ;
And it and all things speak
To the sinking heart of man, and say,
'Tis wicked to be weak.
We would not hear the hated sound ;
But, by the Lord, we must :
If not, the heavy world goes round,
And grinds us into dust."
With each a moral in his mouth,
We rein'd our sweating nags,
Where quiet Ocean, on the South,
Kiss'd Edgecumb's ruddy crags.

II.

1.

SO subtly love within me wrought,
 So excellent she seem'd,
Daily of Blanche was all my thought,
 Nightly of Blanche I dream'd ;
And this was all my wish, and all
 The work now left for life,
To make this Wonder mine, to call
 This laughing Blanche my Wife.

2.

I courted her till hope grew bold ;
 Then sought her in her place,
And all my passion freely told,
 Before her blushing face.
I kiss'd her twice, I kiss'd her thrice,
 Thro' tresses and thro' tears ;
I kiss'd her lips, I kiss'd her eyes,
 And calm'd her joys and fears.

So woo'd I Blanche, and so I sped,
And so, with small delay,
I and the patient Frank were wed
Upon the self-same day.
And friends all round kiss'd either Bride,
I Frank's, Frank mine ; and he
Laugh'd as for once we thus defied
Love's sweet monopoly.
And then we drove by garth and grove ;
And soon forgot the place,
Where all the world had look'd shy Love
So rudely in the face.

III.

1.

THE noon was hot and close and still,
When steadying Blanche's hand,
I led her down the southern hill,
And row'd with her from land.
Ere summer's prime that year the wasp
Lay gorged within the peach ;
The tide, as though the sea did gasp,
Fell lax upon the beach.
Quietly dipp'd the dripping scull,
And all beside was calm ;
But o'er the strange and weary lull
No angel waved his palm.
The sun was rayless, pale the sky,
The distance thick with light :
We glode beyond the fort and by
The war-ship's sleeping might.

Her paddle stirr'd : without a breeze,
 A mimic tempest boil'd :
 The sailors on the silent seas
 With storm-tuned voices toil'd.
 I could not toil ; I seldom pray'd :
 What was to do or ask ?
 Love's purple glory round me play'd,
 Unfed by prayer or task.
 All perfect my contentment was,
 For Blanche was all my care ;
 And heaven seem'd only heaven because
 My goddess would be there.
 No wafted breeze the ships did strike,
 No wish unwon moved me ;
 The peace within my soul was like
 The peace upon the sea.
 At times, when action sleeps, unstirr'd
 By any motive gale,
 A mystic wind, with warning heard,
 Ruffles life's idle sail.
 The fancy, then, a fear devines,
 And, borne on gloomy wings,
 Sees threats and formidable signs
 In simply natural things.

It smote my heart, how, yesternight,
 The moon rose in eclipse;
 And how her maim'd and shapeless light
 O'erhung the senseless ships.
 The passion pass'd, as, lightning-lit,
 Red cloud-scenes show and close;
 And soon came wonder at the fit,
 And smiles and full repose.
 Again I turn'd me, all devote,
 To my sweet Idol's shrine;
 Again I gazed where, on the boat,
 Her shadow mix'd with mine.

2.

Cried Frank, who, with his Wife, was there,
 "We dream ! sing each a song."
 And he sang first an old brave air,
 And pull'd the boat along.

 "Sir Pelles woo'd, in scorn's despite;
 He cherish'd love's sweet smart;
 Ettarde proved light; then, like a Knight,
 He turn'd her from his heart.

O, the remorse with which we pay
 For duties done too well !
 But conscience gay does grief allay ;
 As all true souls can tell."

3.

" Alas, poor Knight !" cried Blanche, " Nay,
 hear,"

Said Frank, " the saddest half !"
 And drearily he troll'd, while clear
 Rose Blanche's puzzled laugh.

" Sir Lob was drunk ; the stars were bright.
 Within an empty ditch,
 Sir Lob all night lay right and tight
 As a Saint within his niche.

Now, well, quoth he, goes life with me :
 I've liquor and to spare ;
 I hate the herd that vulgar be ;
 And, O, the stars are fair !

The mill-dam burst : Sir Lob lay sunk
 In that celestial swoond :

The mill-stream found the knight dead drunk,
And the Jury found him drown'd."

4.

"The tunes are good ; the words," said I,
"Are hard to understand."
And soon I prefaced with a sigh
This pagan love-song grand.

"When Love's bright Ichor fills the veins,
Love's Amaranth lights the brow,
The Past grows dark, the Future wanes,
Before the golden Now.

"Marc Antony the war-flags furl'd,
For Egypt's Queen said, 'Stay :'
He reck'd not of the worthless world,
Well lost by that delay.

"Quoth Antony, Here set I up
My everlasting rest :
Leave me to drain Joy's magic cup,
To dream on Egypt's breast."

5.

Frank smiled, and said my note was wrong ;
 'Twas neither Man's nor Boy's ;
And Blanche sang next, some modern song,
 Of " Flowers " and " Fairy Joys."
As bright departed skies that break
 To let a cherub through,
So seem'd her mouth : my sight did ache,
 Glitt'ring with fiery dew ;
And in the laugh of her brown eye
 My heart, contented so,
Lay like the honey-thirsty fly
 Drowsed in the cactus' glow.
Nor heeded I what sang my Saint,
 Such magic had the sound.
The myrtle in her breath made faint
 The air that hearken'd round.

6.

" Now, Wife," said Frank, " to shame our lays,
 Try you in turn your power :
And sing your little song in praise
 Of Love's selectest flower."

Her hand felt his : thus sang she then,
 Submitted to his rule,
 Tho' shyer than the water-hen
 On Tamar's shadiest pool.

"The Myrtle sates with scent the air
 That flows by Grecian hills ;
 Its fragile leaflets glisten fair
 By warm Italian rills.

"The North too has its Lover's-Flower,
 The glad Forget-me-not ;
 Too bold thro' sunshine, wind, and shower,
 Too blue to be forgot."

7.

Pointing far East, Frank said, "Do you see
 Yon porpoise-droves at play?"
 We gazed and saw, with failing glee,
 Bright lines of spotted spray.
 Once more the boded terror shook
 My heart, and made me dumb.
 "To land ! to land !" cried Frank, "for, look,
 The storm, at last, is come !"

Above us, heated fields of mist
Precipitated cloud ;
For shore we pull'd ; the swift keel hiss'd ;
Above us grew the shroud.
The pale gull flapp'd the stagnant air ;
The thunder-drop fell straight ;
The first wind lifted Blanche's hair ;
Looking to me she sate.
Across the mighty mirror crept,
In dark'ning blasts, the squall ;
And round our terror lightly leapt
Mad wavelets, many and small.
The oars cast by, convuls'd outflow
Our perilous hope the sail :
None spoke ; all watch'd the waves, that grew
Under the splashing hail.
With urgent hearts and useless hands,
We sate and saw them rise,
Coursing to shore in gloomy bands,
Below the appalling skies.
The wrathful thunder scared the deeps ;
And where, upon our wake,
The sea got up in ghastly heaps,
White lines of lightning strake.

On, on, with fainting hope we fled,
Hard-hunted by the grave ;
Slow seem'd it, though like wind we sped
Over the shouldering wave ;
In front swift rose the crags, where still
A storm of sunshine pour'd ;
At last, beneath the southern hill,
The dangerous breakers roar'd.
O, bolt foreseen before it burst !
O, chastening hard to bear !
O, cup of sweetness quite revers'd,
And turn'd to void despair !
Blanche in fear swooning, I let go
The helm ; we struck the ground ;
The sea fell in from stern to prow,
And Blanche, my Bride, was drown'd.

IV.

1.

IN a swift vortex go the years,
Each swifter than the last
And seasons four their set careers
Pursued, and somehow pass'd.
The spirit of Spring, this year, was quench'd
With clouds and wind and rain ;
All night the gust-blown torrent drench'd
The gloomy window-pane ;
Against the pane the flapping blind
Flapp'd ever, dismally ;
And ever, above the rain and wind,
Sounded the dismal sea.
The billows, like some guilty crew
Devour'd by vain remorse,

Dash'd up the beach, sighing withdrew,
 And mix'd with murmurs hoarse.
 The morning was a cheerless sight,
 Amongst the turbid skies ;
 But sweet was the relief of light
 Within my restless eyes :
 For then I rose to prayer and toil,
 Forgat the ocean's moan,
 Or faced the dizzy crash and coil
 That drown'd its mournfuller tone.
 But never, when the tide drew back,
 Trod I the weltering strand ;
 For horribly my single track
 Pursued me in the sand.

2.

One morn I watch'd the rain subside ;
 And then fared singly forth
 Below the clouds, till eve to ride
 From Edgecumb to the North,
 Once, only once, I paused upon
 The sea-transcending height,
 And turn'd to gaze : far breakers shone,
 Slow gleams of silent light.

Into my horse I struck the spur ;
 Sad was the soul in me ;
 Sore were my lids with tears for her
 Who slept beneath the sea.
 But soon I sooth'd my startled horse,
 And check'd that sudden grief,
 And look'd abroad on crag and gorse
 And Dartmoor's cloudy reef.
 Far forth the air was dark and clear,
 The crags acute and large,
 The clouds uneven, black, and near,
 And ragged at the marge.
 The spider, in his rainy mesh,
 Shook not, but, as I rode,
 The opposing air, sweet, sharp, and fresh,
 Against my hot lids flow'd.
 Peat-cutters pass'd me, carrying tools ;
 Hawks glimmer'd on the wing ;
 The ground was glad with grassy pools,
 And brooklets galloping ;
 The sparrow chirp'd with feathers spread,
 And dipp'd and drank his fill,
 Where, down its sandy channel, fled
 The lessening road-side rill.

3.

I cross'd the furze-grown table-land,
 And near'd the northern vales,
 That lay perspicuously plann'd
 In lesser hills and dales.
 Then rearward, in a slow review,
 Fell Dartmoor's jagged lines ;
 Around were dross-heaps, red and blue,
 Old shafts of gutted mines ;
 Impetuous currents copper-stain'd,
 Wheels steam-urged with a roar,
 Sluice-guiding grooves, strong works that
 strain'd
 With freight of upheaved ore.
 And then, the train, with shock on shock,
 Swift rush and birth-scream dire,
 Grew from the bosom of the rock,
 And pass'd in noise and fire.
 With brazen throb, with vital stroke,
 It went, far heard, far seen,
 Setting a track of shining smoke
 Against the pastoral green.

Then, bright drops, lodged in budding trees,
 Were loos'd in sudden showers,
 Touch'd by the novel western breeze,
 Friend of the backward flowers.
 Then rose the Church at Tavistock,
 The rain still falling there ;
 But sunny Dartmoor seem'd to mock
 The gloom with cheerful glare.
 About the West the gilt vane reel'd
 And poised ; and, with sweet art,
 The sudden, jangling changes peal'd,
 Until, around my heart,
 Conceits of brighter times, of times
 The brighter for past storms,
 Clung thick as bees, when brazen chimes
 Call down the hiveless swarms.

4.

I rested at the Tiger-Inn,
 There half-way on my ride,
 And mused with joy of friends and kin
 Who did my coming bide.

The Vicar, in his sombre wear
 That shone about the knees,
 Before me stood, his aspect fair
 With godly memories.
 I heard again his kind "Good-bye :
 Christ speed and keep thee still
 From frantic passions, for they die
 And leave a frantic will."
 My fond, old Tutor, learn'd and meek !
 A soul, in strangest truth,
 As wide as Asia and as weak ;
 Not like his daughter Ruth.
 A Girl of fullest heart she was ;
 Her spirit's lovely flame
 Nor dazzled nor surprised, because
 It always burn'd the same ;
 And in the maiden path she trod
 Fair was the wife foreshewn,
 A Mary in the house of God,
 A Martha in her own.
 Corporeal charms she had ; but these
 Were tranquil, grave, and chaste,
 And all too beautiful to please
 A rash, untutor'd taste.

5.

In love with home, I rose and eyed
 The rainy North ; but there
The distant hill-top, in its pride,
 Adorn'd the brilliant air ;
And, as I pass'd from Tavistock,
 The scatter'd dwellings white,
The Church, the golden weather-cock,
 Were whelm'd in happy light ;
Children began the sun to greet,
 With song and senseless shout ;
The lambs to skip, their dams to bleat ;
 In Tavy leapt the trout ;
Across a fleeting eastern cloud,
 The splendid rainbow sprang,
And larks, invisible and loud,
 Within its zenith sang.

6.

So lay the Earth that saw the skies
 Grow clear and bright above,
As the repentant spirit lies
 In God's forgiving love.

The lark forsook the waning day,
 And all loud songs did cease ;
 The Robin, from a wither'd spray,
 Sang like a soul at peace.

Far to the South, in sunset glow'd
 The peaks of Dartmoor ridge,
 And Tamar, full and tranquil, flow'd
 Beneath the Gresson Bridge.

There, conscious of the numerous noise
 Of rain-awaken'd rills,

And gathering deep and sober joys
 From the heart-enlarging hills ;

I sat, until the first white star
 Appear'd, with dewy rays,
 And the fair moon began to bar

With shadows all the ways.

O, well is thee, whate'er thou art,
 And happy shalt thou be,

If thou hast known, within thy heart,
 The peace that came to me.

O, well is thee, if aught shall win
 Thy spirit to confess,

God proffers all, 'twere grievous sin
 To live content in less !

7.

I mounted, now, my patient nag ;
 And scaled the easy steep ;
And soon beheld the quiet flag
 On Lanson's solemn Keep.
And now, whenas the waking lights
 Bespake the valley'd Town,
A child o'ertook me, on the heights,
 In cap and russet gown.
It was an alms-taught scholar trim,
 Who, on her happy way,
Sang to herself the morrow's hymn ;
 For this was Saturday.

“Saint Stephen, stoned, nor grieved nor groan'd :
 'Twas all for his good gain ;
For Christ him blest, till he confess'd
 A sweet content in pain.

“Then Christ His Cross is no way loss,
 But even a present boon :
Of His dear blood fair shines a flood
 On heaven's eternal noon.”

8.

My sight, once more, was dim for her,
 Who slept beneath the sea,
As on I sped, without the spur,
 By homestead, heath, and lea.
O'erhead the perfect moon kept pace,
 In meek and brilliant power,
And lit, ere long, the eastern face
 Of Tamerton Church-tower.
What guilt was her's? But God is great,
 And all that may be known
To each of any other's fate
 Is, that it helps his own.

THE YEW-BERRY.

I.

I CALL this idle history the "Berry of the
Yew ;"

Because there's nothing sweeter than its husk of
scarlet glue,

And nothing half so bitter as its black core bitten
through.

I loved, saw hope, and said so ; learn'd that Laura
loved again ;

Wherefore speak of joy then suffer'd ? My head
throbs, and I would fain

Find words to lay the spectre starting now before
my brain.

She loved me : all things told it ; eye to eye, and
 palm to palm :
 As the pause upon the ceasing of a thousand-voiced
 psalm
 Was the mighty satisfaction and the full eternal
 calm.

On her face, when she was laughing, was the seri-
 ousness within ;
 Her sweetest smiles, (and sweeter did a lover never
 win,)
 Ere half done, grew so absent that they made her
 fair cheek thin.

On her face, when she was talking, thoughts un-
 worded used to live ;
 So that when she whisper'd to me, " Better joy
 Earth cannot give,"
 Her silent lips continued, " But Earth's joy is fugi-
 tive."

For there a nameless something, though suppress'd,
 still spread around ;
 The same was on her eyelids, if she look'd towards
 the ground ;
 When she spoke I knew directly that the same was
 in the sound ;—

A fine dissatisfaction which at no time went away,
 But brooded on her spirit, even at its brightest
 play,
 Till her mirth was like the sunshine in the closing
 of the day.

II.

Let none ask joy the highest, save those who would
 have it end :
 There's weight in earthly blessings ; they are earthy,
 and they tend,
 By predetermin'd impulse, at their highest, to descend.

I still for a happy season, in the present, saw the
 past,
 Mistaking one for the other, feeling sure my hold
 was fast
 On that of which the symbols vanish'd daily : but
 at last,

As when we watch bright cloud-banks round about
 the low sun ranged,
 We suddenly remember some rich glory gone or
 changed,
 All at once I comprehended that her love was grown
 estranged.

From this time, spectral glimpses of a darker fear
came on :

They came; but, since I scorn'd them, were no
sooner come than gone.—

At times, some gap in sequence frees the spirit, and
anon,

We remember of states of living ended ere we left
the womb,

And see a vague aurora flashing to us from the
tomb,

The dreamy light of new states, dashed tremendously
with gloom.

We tremble for an instant, and a single instant
more

Brings absolute oblivion, and we pass on as before !
Ev'n so those dreadful glimpses came, and startled,
and were o'er.

One morning, one bright morning, Wortley met me.

He and I,

As we rode across the country, met a friend of his.

His eye

Caught Wortley's, who rode past him. "What,"
said he, "pass old friends by?"

So I've heard your game is grounded ! Why your
 life's one long romance
 After your last French fashion. But, ah ! ha !
 should Herbert chance——"
 "Nay, Herbert's here," said he, and introduced me,
 with a glance

Of easy smiles, ignoring this embarrassment, and
 then
 This pass'd off, and soon after I went home, and
 took a pen,
 And wrote the signs here written, with much more,
 and where, and when ;

And, having read them over once or twice, sat down
 to think,
 From time to time beneath them writing more, till,
 link by link,
 The evidence against her was fulfill'd : I did not
 shrink,

But I read them all together, and I found it was
 no dream.
 What I felt I can't remember ; an oblivion which
 the gleam
 Of light which oft comes through it shews for
 blessedness extreme.

At last I moved, exclaiming, "I will not believe,
 until
 I've spoken once with Laura." Thereon all my
 heart grew still :
 For doubt and faith are active, and decisions of the
 will.

III.

I found my Love. She started : I suppose that I
 was pale.
 We talk'd ; but words on both sides, seem'd to
 sicken, flag, and fail.
 Then I gave her what I'd written, watching
 whether she would quail.

In and out flew sultry blushes ; so, when red re-
 flections rise
 From conflagrations, filling the alarm'd heart with
 surmise,
 They lighten now, now darken, up and down the
 gloomy skies.

She finish'd once ; but fearing to look from it, read
 it o'er
 Ten times at least. Poor Laura, had those read-
 ings been ten score,
 That refuge from confusion had confused thee more
 and more !

I said, "You're ill, sit Laura," and she sat down
and was meek.

"Ah tears! not lost to God then. But pray
Laura, do not speak:

I understand you better by the moisture on your
cheek."

She shook with sobs, in silence. I yet checking
passion's sway,

Said only, "Farewell Laura!" then got up, and
strode away;

For I felt that she would burst my heart asunder
should I stay.

Oh, ghastly corpse of Love so slain! it makes the
world its hearse;

Or, as the sun extinct and dead, after the doomsday
curse,

It rolls, an unseen danger, through the darken'd
universe.

I struggled to forget this; but, forgetfulness too
sweet!

It startled with its sweetness, thus involv'd its own
defeat;

And, every time this happen'd, aching memory
would repeat

The shock of that discovery : so at length I learn'd
by heart,
And never, save when sleeping, suffer'd thenceforth
to depart
The feeling of my sorrow : and in time this sooth'd
the smart.

Yet even now not seldom, in my leisure, in the
thick
Of other thoughts, unchalleng'd, words and looks
come crowding thick—
They do while I am writing, till the sunshine
makes me sick.

THE RIVER.

IT is a venerable place,
An old ancestral ground,
So broad the rainbow wholly stands
Within its lordly bound ;
And here the river waits and winds
By many a wooded mound.

Upon a rise, where single oaks
And clumps of beeches tall
Drop pleasantly their shade beneath,
Half-hid amidst them all,
Stands in its quiet dignity
An ancient manor-hall.

About its many gable-ends
 The swallows wheel their flight ;
 Its huge fantastic weather-vanes
 Look happy in the light ;
 Its warm face through the foliage gleams,
 A comfortable sight.

The ivied turrets seem to love
 The butterflies and bees ;
 And, though this manor-hall hath seen
 The snow of centuries,
 How freshly still it stands amid
 Its wealth of swelling trees !

The leafy summer-time is young ;
 The yearling lambs are strong ;
 The sunlight glances merrily ;
 The trees are full of song ;
 The valley-loving river flows
 Contentedly along.

Look where the merry weather-vanes
 Veer upon yonder tower :
 There, amid starry jessamine
 And clasping passion-flower,
 The sweetest Maid of all the land
 Is weeping in her bower.

Alas, the lowly Youth she loves
 Loves her, but fears to sue :
 He came this morning hurriedly ;
 Then forth her blushes flew !
 But he talk'd of common things, and so
 Her eyes are fill'd with dew.

Time passes on ; the clouds are come ;
 The river, late so bright,
 Rolls foul and black, and gloomily
 Makes known across the night,
 In far-heard splash and weary drench,
 The passage of its might.

The noble Bridegroom counts the hours ;
 The guests are coming fast ;
 (The vanes are creaking drearily
 Within the dying blast !)
 The bashful Bride is at his side ;
 And night is here at last.

The guests are gay ; the minstrels play ;
 'Tis liker noon than night ;
 From side to side, they toast the Bride,
 Who blushes ruby light :
 For one and all within that hall,
 It is a cheerful sight.

But unto one, who stands alone,
Among the mists without,
Watching the windows, bright with shapes
Of king and saint devout,
Strangely across the muffled air
Pierces the laughter-shout.

No sound or sight this solemn night
But moves the soul to fear :
The faded saints stare through the gloom,
Askant, and wan, and blear ;
And wither'd cheeks of watchful kings
Start from their purple gear.

The burthen of the wedding-song
Comes to him like a wail ;
The stream, athwart the cedar-grove,
Is shining ghastly pale ;
His cloudy brow clears suddenly !
Dark soul, what does thee ail ?

He turns him from the lighted hall ;
His sad breast scarcely heaves ;
He paces t'wards the gloomy wood ;
Across it breaks and cleaves ;
And now his footfall dies away
Upon the wither'd leaves.

The restless moon, among the clouds,
Is loitering slowly by ;
Now in a circle like the ring
About a weeping eye ;
Now left quite bare and bright, and now
A pallor in the sky.

And now she's looking through the mist,
Cold, lustreless, and wan ;
And wildly past her dreary form
The watery clouds rush on,
A moment white beneath her light,
And then, like spirits, gone.

Silent and fast they hurry past,
Their swiftness striketh dread,
For earth is hush'd, and no breath sweeps
The spider's rainy thread,
And every thing, but those pale clouds,
Is dark, and still, and dead.

The lonely stars are here and there,
But weak and wasting all ;
The winds are dead, the cedars spread
Their branches like a pall ;
The guests, by laughing twos and threes,
Have left the bridal hall.

Beneath the mossy, ivied bridge,
 The river slippeth past :
 The current deep is still as sleep,
 And yet so very fast !
 There's something in its quietness
 That makes the soul aghast.

No wind is in the willow-tree
 That droops above the bank ;
 The water passes quietly
 Beneath the sedges dank ;
 Yet the willow trembles in the stream,
 And the dry reeds talk and clank.

The weak stars swoon ; the jagged moon
 Is lost in the cloudy air.
 No thought of light ! save where the wave
 Sports with a fitful glare.
 The dumb and dreadful world is full
 Of darkness and night-mare.

The hall-clocks clang ; the watch-dog barks ;
 What are his dreams about ?
 Marsh lights leap, and tho' fast asleep
 The owlets shriek and shout ;
 The stars, thro' chasms in utter black,
 Race like a drunken rout.

Wake, wake, oh wake!" the Bridegroom now
 Calls to his sleeping Bride:
 "Alas, I saw thee, pale and dead,
 Roll down a frightful tide!"
 He takes her hand: "How chill thou art!
 'What is it, sweet my Bride?'"

The Bride bethinks her now of him
 Who last night was no guest.
 "Sweet Heaven! and for me? I dream!
 Be calm, thou throbbing breast."
 She says, in thought, a solemn prayer,
 And sinks again to rest.

Along, along, swiftly and strong
 The river slippeth past;
 The current deep is still as sleep,
 And yet so very fast!
 There's something in its quietness
 That makes the soul aghast.

The morn has risen: wildly by
 The water glides to-day;
 Outspread upon its eddying face,
 Long weeds and rushes play;
 And on the bank the fungus rots
 And the grass is foul'd with clay.

Time passes on : the park is bare ;
 The year is scant and lean ;
 The river's banks are desolate ;
 The air is chill and keen ;
 But, now and then, a sunny day
 Comes with a thought of green.

Amid blear February's flaw,
 Tremulous snow-drops peep ;
 The crocus, in the shrewd March morn,
 Starts from its wintry sleep ;
 The daisies sun themselves in hosts,
 Among the pasturing sheep.

The waters, in their old content,
 Between fresh margins run ;
 The pike, as trackless as a sound,
 Shoots thro' the current dun ;
 And languid new-born chestnut-leaves
 Expand beneath the sun.

The summer's prime is come again ;
 The roses bloom anew ;
 The current keeps the doubtful past
 Deep in its bosom blue,
 And babbles low thro' quiet fields
 Grey with the falling dew.

The sheep-bell tolls the curfew-time ;
 The gnats, a busy rout,
 Fleck the warm air ; the distant owl
 Shouteth a sleepy shout ;
 The voiceless bat, more felt than seen,
 Is flitting round about ;

The poplar's leaflet scarcely stirs ;
 The river seems to think ;
 Across the dusk, the lily broad
 Looks coolly from the brink ;
 And knee-deep in the freshet's fall,
 The meek-eyed cattle drink.

The chafers boom ; the white moths rise
 Like spirits from the ground ;
 The grey-flies sing their weary tune,
 A distant, dream-like sound ;
 And far, far off, in the slumberous eve,
 Bayeth a restless hound.

At this sweet time, the Lady walks
 Beside the gentle stream ;
 She marks the waters curl along,
 Beneath the sunset gleam,
 And in her soul a sorrow moves,
 Like memory of a dream.

She passes on. How still the earth,
And all the air above !
Here, where of late the scritch-owl shriek'd,
Whispers the happy dove ;
And the river, through the ivied bridge,
Flows calm as household love.

THE FALCON.

WHO would not be Sir Hubert, for his birth
and bearing fine,
His rich sky-skirted woodlands, valleys flowing oil
and wine ;
Sir Hubert, to whose sunning all the rays of fortune
shine ?

So some men praised Sir Hubert, and the others
warm'd with praise
Of Hubert noble-hearted, than whom none went on
his ways
Less spoilt by splendid fortune, whom no peril could
amaze.

To Ladies all, save one, he was the rule by which
 the worth
 Of other men was reckon'd ; so that many a maid,
 for dearth
 Of such a knight to woo her, love forswore, and
 with it mirth.

No prince could match his banquets, when proud
 Mabel was his guest ;
 And shows and sumptuous triumphs day by day his
 hope express'd
 That love ev'n yet might burgeon in her young
 unburgeon'd breast.

Time pass'd, and use for riches pass'd with hope,
 which slowly fled ;
 And want came on unheeded ; and report in one
 day spread
 Of good Sir Hubert houseless, and of Mabel richly
 wed.

Forth went he from the city where she dwelt, to
 one poor farm,
 All left of all his valleys : there Sir Hubert's single
 arm
 Serv'd Hubert's wants ; and labour soon relieved
 love's rankling harm.

Much hardship brought much easement of the
 melancholy freight
 He bore within his bosom ; and his fancy was
 elate
 And proud of Love's rash sacrifice which led to
 this estate :

One friend was left, a falcon, famed for beauty, skill
 and size,
 Kept from his fortune's ruin, for the sake of its
 great eyes,
 That seem'd to him like Mabel's. Of an evening
 he would rise,

And wake its royal glances and reluctantly flapp'd
 wings,
 And looks of grave communion with his lightsome
 questionings,
 That broke the drowsy sameness, and the sense like
 fear that springs

At night when we are conscious of our distance from
 the strife
 Of cities, and the memory of the spirit in all things
 rife
 Endows the silence round us with a grim and
 ghastly life.

His active resignation wrought, in time, a heartfelt
 peace,
 And though, in noble bosoms, love once lit can never
 cease,
 He could walk and think of Mabel, and his pace
 would not increase.

Who say, when somewhat distanced from the heat
 and fiercer might,
 "Love's brand burns us no longer ; it is out," use
 not their sight :
 For ever and for ever we are lighted by the
 light :

And ere there be extinguish'd one minutest flame,
 love-fann'd,
 The Pyramids of Egypt shall have no place in the
 land,
 But as a nameless portion of its ever-shifting sand.

News came at last that Mabel was a widow ; but
 with this,
 That all her dead Lord's wealth went first to her one
 child and his ;
 So she was not for Hubert, had she beckon'd him to
 bliss ;

For Hubert felt, tho' Mabel might, like him, become
resign'd
To poverty for Love's sake, she might never, like
him, find
That poverty is plenty, peace and freedom of the
mind.

One morning, while he rested from his delving, spade
in hand,
He thought of her and blest her, and he look'd about
the land,
And he, and all he look'd at, seem'd to brighten and
expand.

The wind was newly risen ; and the airy skies were
rife
With fleets of sailing cloudlets, and the trees were
all in strife,
Extravagantly triumphant at their newly gotten
life.

Birds wrangled in the branches, with a trouble of
sweet noise ;
Even the conscious cuckoo, judging wisest to rejoice,
Shook round his "cuckoo, cuckoo," as if careless of
his voice.

But Hubert mused and marvell'd at the glory in
 his breast ;
 The first glow turn'd to passion, and he nurs'd it
 unexpress'd ;
 And glory gilding glory turn'd, at last, to sunny
 rest.

Then again he look'd around him like an angel, and,
 behold,
 The scene was changed ; no cloudlets cross'd the
 serious blue, but, roll'd
 Behind the distant hill-tops, gleam'd ærial hills of
 gold.

The wind too was abated, and the trees and birds
 were grown
 As quiet as the cloud-banks ; right above, the bright
 sun shone,
 Down looking from the forehead of the giant sky
 alone.

Then the nightingale, awaken'd by the silence, shot
 a throng
 Of notes into the sunshine ; cautious first, then swift
 and strong ;
 Then he madly smote them round him, till the bright
 air throbb'd with song,

And suddenly stopp'd singing, all amid his ecstasies :—

Myrtles rustle ; what sees Hubert ? sight is sceptic,
but his knees

Bend to the Lady Mabel, as she blossoms from the
trees.

She spoke, her eyes cast downwards, while upon
them, dropp'd half-way,

Lids fairer than the bosom of an unblown lily
lay :

“ In faith of ancient amity, Sir Hubert, I this
day

“ Would beg a boon, and bind me your great
debtor.” O, her mouth

Was sweet beyond new honey, or the bean-per-
fumed South,

And better than pomegranates to a pilgrim dumb
for drouth.

She look'd at his poor homestead ; at the spade
beside his hand ;

And then her heart reproach'd her, What inordinate
demand

Was she come there for making ! Then she says,
in accents bland,

Her page and she are weary, and her wish can
 wait : she'll share
 His noontide meal, by his favour. This he hastens
 to prepare,
 But, lo ! the roost is empty, and his humble larder
 bare.

No friend has he to help him ; no one near of
 whom to claim
 The tax, and force its payment in his passion's
 sovereign name ;
 No time to set the pitfalls for the swift and fearful
 game ;

Too late to fly his falcon, which, as if it would
 assist
 Its master's trouble, perches on his idly proffer'd
 fist,
 With busy, dumb caresses, treading up and down
 his wrist,

But now a gleam of comfort and a shadow of
 dismay
 Pass o'er the good knight's features ; now it seems
 he would essay
 The fatness of his falcon, while it flaps both wings
 for play ;

Now, lo, the ruthless lover takes it off its trusted
stand ;
Grasps all its frighten'd body with his hard re-
morseless hand ;
Puts out its faithful life, and plucks and broils it
on the brand.

In midst of this famed dinner, Mabel gave her wish
its word :
“ My wilful child, Sir Hubert, pines from fancy
long deferr'd ;
And now he raves in fever to possess your famous
bird.”

“ Alas !” he said, “ behold it there.” Then nobly
did she say :
“ It grieves my heart, Sir Hubert, that I'm much
too poor to pay
For this o'er-queenly banquet I am honour'd with
to-day :

But if, Sir, we two, henceforth, can converse as
friends, my board
To you shall be as open as it would were you its
Lord.”
And so she bow'd and left him, from his vex'd
mind unrestored.

Months pass'd, and Hubert went not, but lived on
 in his old way ;
 Until to him, one morning, Mabel sent her page to
 say,
 That should it suit his pleasure, she would speak
 with him that day.

" Ah, welcome Sir !" said Mabel, rising courteous,
 kind, and free :
 " I hoped, ere this, to have had you for my guest,
 but now I see
 That you are even prouder than they whisper you
 to be."

Made grave by her great beauty, but not dazzled,
 he replied,
 With every noble courtesy, to her words ; and
 spoke beside
 Such things as are permitted to bare friendship ;
 not in pride,

Or wilful overacting of the right, which often
 blends
 Its sacrificial pathos, bitter-sweet, with lover's
 ends,
 Or that he now remember'd her command to meet
 " as friends :"

But having not had knowledge that the infant heir
 was dead,
 Whose life made it more loving to preserve his
 love unsaid,
 He waited, calmly wondering to what mark this
 summons led.

She, puzzled with a strangeness by his actions
 disavow'd,
 Spoke further : " Once, Sir Hubert, I was thought-
 less, therefore proud ;
 Your love on me shone sunlike. I, alas, have been
 your cloud,

And, graceless, quench'd the light that made me
 splendid. I would fain
 Pay part of what I owe you, that is, if,—alas, but
 then
 I know not ! Things are changed, and you are not
 as other men."

She strove to give her meaning, yet blush'd deeply
 with dismay
 Lest he should find it. Hubert fear'd she purpos'd
 to repay
 Love's offerings with lucre, which she wanted words
 to say.

His eyes are dropp'd in sorrow from their wor-
 shipping : but, lo !
 Upon her sable vesture they are fall'n : with pro-
 gress slow,
 Through dawning apprehension to sweet hope, his
 features glow ;

And all at once are lighted with a light, as when
 the moon,
 Long labouring to the margin of a cloud, still
 seeming soon
 About to swim beyond it, bursts at last as bare as
 noon.

"O, Lady, I have loved, and long kept silence ;
 but I see
 The time is come for speaking. O, sweet Lady, I
 should be
 The blessedest knight in Christendom, were I
 beloved by thee !"

One small hand's weight of whiteness on her bosom
 did she press ;
 The other, woo'd with kisses bold, refused not that
 caress ;
 Feasting the hungry silence came, sob-clad, her
 silver " Yes."

Now who would not be Hubert, for his dark-eyed
Bride divine,
Her rich, sky-skirted woodlands, valleys flowing
oil and wine,
Sir Hubert to whose sunning all the rays of fortune
shine !

THE WOODMAN'S DAUGHTER.

IN Gerald's Cottage by the hill,
Old Gerald and his child,
Innocent Maud, dwelt happily ;
He toil'd, and she beguiled
The long day at her spinning-wheel,
In the garden now grown wild.

At Gerald's stroke the jay awoke ;
Till noon hack follow'd hack,
Before the nearest hill had time
To give its echo back ;
And evening mists were in the lane
Ere Gerald's arm grew slack.

Meanwhile, below the scented heaps
 Of honeysuckle flower,
 That made their simple cottage-porch
 A cool, luxurious bower,
 Maud sat beside her spinning-wheel,
 And spun from hour to hour.

The growing thread thro' her fingers sped ;
 Round flew the polish'd wheel ;
 Merrily rang the notes she sang
 At every finish'd reel ;
 From the hill again, like a shrill refrain,
 Follow'd the rapid peal.

But all is changed. The rusting axe
 Reddens a wither'd bough ;
 A spider spins in the spinning-wheel,
 And Maud sings wildly now ;
 And village gossips say she knows
 Grief she may not avow.

Her secret's this : In the sweet age
 When heaven's our side the lark,
 She follow'd her old father, where
 He work'd from dawn to dark,
 For months, to thin the crowded groves
 Of the ancient Manor-Park.

She fancied and he felt she help'd ;
 And, whilst he hack'd and saw'd,
 The rich Squire's son, a young boy then,
 Whole mornings, as if awed,
 Stood silent by, and gazed in turn
 At Gerald and on Maud.

And sometimes, in a sullen tone,
 He offer'd fruits, and she
 Received them always with an air
 So unreserv'd and free,
 That shame-faced distance soon became
 Familiarity.

Therefore in time, when Gerald shook
 The woods, no longer coy,
 The young heir and the cottage-girl
 Would steal out to enjoy
 The sound of one another's talk,
 A simple girl and boy.

Spring after Spring, they took their walks
 Uncheck'd, unquestion'd ; yet
 They learn'd to hide their wanderings
 By wood and rivulet,
 Because they could not give themselves
 A reason why they met.

Once Maud came weeping back. "Poor Child!"

Was all her father said :
And he would steady his old hand
Upon her hapless head,
And think of her as tranquilly
As if the child were dead.

But he is gone : and Maud steals out,
This gentle day of June ;
And having sobb'd her pain to sleep,
Help'd by the stream's soft tune,
She rests along the willow-trunk,
Below the calm blue noon.

The shadow of her shame and her
Deep in the stream, behold !
Smiles quake over her parted lips :
Some thought has made her bold ;
She stoops to dip her fingers in,
To feel if it be cold.

'Tis soft and warm, and runs as 'twere
Perpetually at play :
But then the stream, she recollects,
Bears everything away.
There is a dull pool hard at hand
That sleeps both night and day.

She marks the closing weeds that shut
 The water from her sight ;
 They stir awhile, but now are still ;
 Her arms fall down ; the light
 Is horrible, and her countenance
 Is pale as a cloud at night.

Merrily now from the small church-tower
 Clashes a noisy chime ;
 The larks climb up thro' the heavenly blue,
 Carolling as they climb :
 Is it the twisting water-eft
 That dimples the green slime ?

The pool reflects the scarlet West
 With a hot and guilty glow ;
 The East is changing ashy pale ;
 But Maud will never go
 While those great bubbles struggle up
 From the rotting weeds below.

The light has changed. A little since
 You scarcely might descry
 The moon, now gleaming sharp and bright,
 From the small cloud slumbering nigh ;
 And, one by one, the timid stars,
 Step out into the sky.

The night blackens the pool ; but Maud
Is constant at her post,
Sunk in a dread, unnatural sleep,
Beneath the skiey host
Of drifting mists, thro' which the moon
Is riding like a ghost.

THE STORM.

WITHIN the pale blue haze above,
Some pitchy shreds took size and form,
And, like a madman's wrath or love,
From nothing rose a sudden storm.
The blossom'd limes, which seem'd to exhale
Her breath, were swept with one strong sweep,
And up the dusty road the hail
Came like a flock of hasty sheep,
Driving me into a cottage-porch,
From whence I watch'd the distant Spire,
Which, in the darkness, seem'd a torch
Touch'd with the sun's retreating fire.
A voice, so sweet that even her voice,
I thought, could scarcely be more sweet,
As thus I stay'd against my choice,
Did mine attracted hearing greet ;

And presently I turn'd my head
Where the kind music seem'd to be,
And where, to an old blind man, she read
The words that teach the blind to see.
She did not mark me ; quick I went,
Thro' the fierce shower's whistle and smoke,
To her home, and thence her woman sent
Back with umbrella, shoes and cloak.
The storm soon pass'd ; the sun's quick glare
Lay quench'd in vapours fleecy, fray'd ;
And all the moist, delicious air
Was fill'd with shine that cast no shade ;
And, when she came, forth the sun gleam'd,
And clash'd the trembling Minster chimes ;
And the breath with which she thank'd me seem'd
Brought thither from the blossom'd limes.

NIGHT AND SLEEP.

I.

HOW strange at night to wake
And watch, while others sleep,
Till sight and hearing ache
For objects that may keep
The awful inner sense
Unroused, lest it should mark
The life that haunts the emptiness
And horror of the dark !

II.

How strange the distant bay
Of dogs ; how wild the note
Of cocks that scream for day,
In homesteads far remote ;
How strange and wild to hear
The old and crumbling tower,
Amidst the darkness, suddenly
Take tongue and speak the hour !

III.

Albeit the love-sick brain
Affects the dreary moon,
Ill things alone refrain
From life's nocturnal swoon :
Men melancholy mad,
Beasts ravenous and sly,
The robber, and the murderer,
Remorse, with lidless eye.

IV.

The nightingale is gay,
For she can vanquish night ;
Dreaming, she sings of day,
Notes that make darkness bright ;
But when the reflux gloom
Saddens the gaps of song,
Men charge on her the dolefulness,
And call her crazed with wrong.

THE TRAGEDY OF TRAGEDIES.

I AM not easily moved to mourn ;
Pity I neither ask nor give
For common ills, which may be borne
With thanks, as teaching men to live.
Flesh-racking pain, wan death in blood,
That have I borne, this borne to see,
Unscared ; but to hear of womanhood
By fraud discrown'd of chastity,
To mark the world's indifferent eyes,
And God's postponement to be just,
While the white, guiltless lily dies,
Crush'd by the stupid hoof of lust,
Makes me as one who an earthquake feels ;
The weight of apprehended ill
Sickens my spirit ; shock'd faith reels ;
And wrath and pity work, until
For me the lights of the heaven fall,
The interests of the earth depart,
And nature for a space seems all
Horror and darkness at the heart.

A LONDON FÊTE.

ALL night fell hammers, shock on shock ;
With echoes Newgate's granite clang'd :
The scaffold built, at eight o'clock
They brought the man out to be hang'd.
Then came from all the people there
A single cry, that shook the air ;
Mothers held up their babes to see,
Who spread their hands, and crow'd for glee ;
Here a girl from her vesture tore
A rag to wave with, and join'd the roar ;
There a man, with yelling tired,
Stopp'd, and the culprit's crime inquired ;
A sot, below the doom'd man dumb,
Bawl'd his health in the world to come ;
These blasphemed and fought for places ;
Those, half-crush'd, cast frantic faces,
To windows, where, in freedom sweet,
Others enjoy'd the wicked treat.
At last, the show's dread crisis pended ;
Struggles for better standings ended ;

The rabble's lips no longer curst,
 But stood agape with horrid thirst ;
 Thousands of breasts beat horrid hope ;
 Thousands of eyeballs, lit with hell,
 Burnt one way all, to see the rope
 Unslacken as the platform fell.
 The rope flew tight : and then the roar
 Burst forth afresh ; less loud, but more
 Confused and affrighting than before.
 A few harsh tongues for ever led
 The common din, the chaos of noises,
 But ear could not catch what they said.
 As when the realm of the damn'd rejoices
 At winning a soul to its will,
 That clatter and clangour of hateful voices
 Sicken'd and stunn'd the air, until
 The dangling corpse hung straight and still.
 The show complete, the pleasure past,
 The solid masses loosen'd fast :
 A thief slunk off, with ample spoil,
 To ply elsewhere his daily toil ;
 A baby strung its doll to a stick ;
 A mother praised the pretty trick ;
 Two children caught and hang'd a cat ;
 Two friends walk'd on, in lively chat ;
 And two, who had disputed places,
 Went forth to fight, with murderous faces.

THE CIRCLES.

“ **W**ITHIN yon world-wide cirque of war
What's hidden which they fight so for ?”
My guide made answer, “ Rich increase
Of virtue and use, which are by peace,
And peace by war. That inner ring
Are craftsmen, working many a thing
For many an end ; and others, wise,
Explore the grass and read the skies.”
“ Can the stars' motions give me peace,
Or the herbs' virtues mine increase ?
Of all this shell of use,” said I,
“ Would that I might the kernel spy !”
“ Go further in,” he said, “ and see,
Secure and fair, Society.”
And so within that busy round
I brake, and came to calmer ground.
Here men and women, great and small,
Were talking, somewhat idly all.

"The lip of scorn might well be curl'd
 At such excuse for such a world !"
 Sigh'd L. But, guided through the loud
 Elated and unfruitful crowd,
 An inner circle still I reach'd,
 Where sang a few and many preach'd
 Of life immortal. "But," I said,
 "The riddle yet I have not read.
 Life I must know, that care I may
 For life in me to last for aye."
 Then he, "Those voices are a charm
 To keep yon dove-cot out of harm."
 In the centre, then, he shew'd a tent
 Where, laughing safe, a woman bent
 Over her babe, and, her above,
 Lean'd in his turn a graver love.
 "Behold the two idolatries
 By which," cried he, "the world defies
 Choas and death, and for whose sake
 All else must war and work and wake."

EROS.

BRIGHT thro' the valley gallops the brooklet ;
Over the welkin travels the cloud ;
Touch'd by the zephyr, dances the harebell ;
Cuckoo sits somewhere, singing so loud ;
Swift o'er the meadows glitter the starlings,
Striking their wings all the flock at a stroke ;
Under the chesnuts new bees are swarming,
Rising and falling like magical smoke ;
Two little children, seeing and hearing,
Hand in hand wander, shout, laugh, and sing :
Lo, in their bosoms, wild with the marvel,
Love, like the crocus, is come ere the Spring.
Young men and women, noble and tender,
Yearn for each other, faith truly plight,
Promise to cherish, comfort and honour ;
Vow that makes duty one with delight.
Oh, but the glory, found in no story,
Radiance of Eden unquench'd by the Fall ;
Few may remember, none may reveal it,
This the first first-love, the first love of all !



